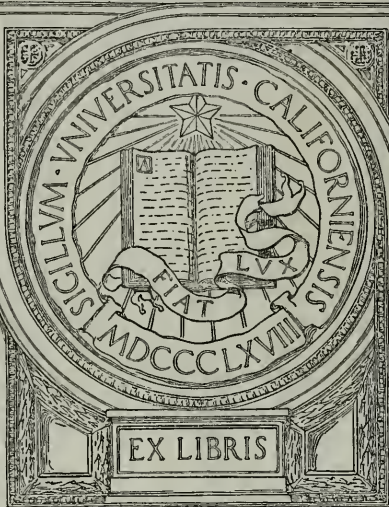


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# CROMWELL'S PLACE IN HISTORY

FOUNDED ON SIX LECTURES DELIVERED IN THE  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

BY

SAMUEL RAWSON GARDINER, D.C.L.

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## PREFACE

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It would be as undesirable as it is impossible to reproduce in print words spoken without notes to a sympathetic audience. Much even of my argument had passed from my mind when I was requested to publish what I had said last autumn. That I have been able to keep before myself the general line of thought on which my lectures were based is owing to two students of Lady Margaret Hall, Miss L. Verney and Miss Gunter, who kindly placed their notes at my disposal. To a certain extent, however, the lectures have been recast. Things fit to be spoken are not always fit to be printed, and things fit to be printed are not always fit to be spoken.

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# CROMWELL'S PLACE IN HISTORY

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## LECTURE I

### THE PURITAN AND CONSTITUTIONAL OPPOSITION

THE object of these lectures is not to deal with the biography of Cromwell, but to estimate his relation to the political and ecclesiastical movements of his time—to show how he was influenced by them and influenced them in turn.

The Revolution in which Cromwell played a conspicuous part was, like all other revolutions, the product of two factors, dissatisfaction with existing ideas and dissatisfaction with existing practice. The former appeals to thinking men who care about ideas, the latter to the mass which cares about practice. When the two are fused together the opposition becomes irresistible. Under ordinary circumstances political evolution results from the partial and gradual blending of these two influences when the holders of authority have become obnoxious alike to the men who think and to the men who feel. When the mischief is too tenacious to be got

rid of by constitutional pressure, the fusion of thought and feeling becomes more complete, and the ensuing change takes the form of a revolution. The Reform Act of 1832 is an example of one process, the Revolution of the seventeenth century an example of the other.

Every revolution, therefore, presupposes an intellectual basis in the opposition of men of thought to prevailing opinion, and a material basis in the resolve of the many to the removal of the practical grievances of which they complain. In the case of the great French Revolution, for instance, this double tendency is plainly seen. Voltaire and the Encyclopedists by upholding the supremacy of reason appealed mainly to the cultivated and intellectual class. Rousseau, by preaching equality and the sovereignty of the people, swayed the masses, who were eager to throw off their material burdens. The great upheaval resulted from the fusion of the two, though the connection under ordinary circumstances was not a necessary one.

In our own Revolution the evil to be combated was less monstrous and less deeply rooted, and consequently the remedies applied were more moderate. Still, we have the same combination in the precursors of resistance. For Voltaire and the Encyclopedists we have the Puritans, upholding a religious life which not only has no necessary connection with the rule of the majority, but which appeals for support to something very different from the popular judgment. On the other hand we have lawyers and constitutionalists

appealing to the authority of a Parliament which, if it was not directly elected by the numerical majority of the nation, was at least sufficiently representative of the nation as a whole for the purposes of the day.

The difference in character and doctrine between the precursors of the two Revolutions is obvious enough and need not be discussed here. Yet there is one point on which comparison may be profitable. After more than a century has passed, the essential points in the teaching of Voltaire and Rousseau are still living in France. When a century had passed after the English uprising in 1640 the development of the parliamentary system had more than fulfilled the expectations of Coke or Eliot. Was it the same with Puritanism; or was the Puritanism of the seventeenth century a mere backwater, produced by the sudden intervention of an obstacle in the course of national progress, and destined to fade away when its purposes had been served?

Before such a question can be profitably answered it is necessary in some measure at least to define what we mean by Puritanism. Like all great movements it was far from being simple in its character, and gives rise to many different judgments in accordance with the point of view from which it is regarded. Puritanism may be thought of as exemplified in the religion of Milton or Howe, or in the minute scrupulosity of Prynne. A Venetian ambassador once even complained of Charles I., when he was Prince of Wales, as being too much of a

Puritan, apparently because he was at that time eager for a war with Spain.

The noblest part of every great movement, religious or otherwise, is invariably that which is universal—that is to say, which is under the influence of thoughts capable of combination with thoughts arising in the minds of its opponents. That which is local or intellectually exaggerated may be called out by special circumstances of place or time, may even have worked for good under these limitations, but becomes purely noxious when the circumstances which once called it forth have passed away.

Of the religion and character of the Puritans of the seventeenth century there is indeed much—and that, too, of the highest that they had to offer—which has never passed away, nor, as we may fervently hope, will ever pass away from amongst us—the high spiritual and moral aims, the strong individual energy on behalf of everything that they held lovely and of good report, and the contempt alike for outward formalities apart from spiritual grace, and for the commands of their fellow men, whether kings or parliaments, to act otherwise than in accordance with the dictates of their consciences. In these things, however, Puritanism was but the highest expression of Protestantism, and it seems better to reserve the name of Protestantism for this higher religion which has perpetuated itself by permeating the lives of men who would be the first to disown fellowship with the Puritans of the sixteenth century.



Every spirit must take to itself a form, and the spirit of Protestantism took to itself a form in its struggles against the papacy and the secular authorities by which the papacy was supported. Wherever Protestantism was on its defence it developed intellectually the Calvinistic creed, and where, as in Scotland, Protestantism was threatened not merely by invasion from abroad, but by attack from the ruler in whose hands lay the reins of government, it adopted the Presbyterian organisation as its best means of presenting a firm front against the assaults of a government working in the papal interest. Nor was it only by a creed and an organisation that militant Puritanism was known. It strove its best to be ascetic in those directions to which the asceticism of the Church of Rome had not extended. 'Touch not, taste not, handle not,' was written on its banners. It erected into a dogma the extreme Sabbatarianism which converted the sacred festival of Christianity into a day of gloom. It set its face against amusements which might in any wise serve as temptations to looseness of life. Such pleasures as it permitted must be taken seriously and sadly.

This creed and discipline were offered to the world, not as mere temporary expedients, but as immovable pillars of the divine temple, without which, perhaps, no real Christianity could exist, and which must, therefore, be imposed on all men without consideration of their wishes. Clad in the armour of the Calvinistic creed

the more religious of the Elizabethan Protestants defied the missionaries of Rome and the fleets of Spain. They did their work—a work which, without this armour, could never have been accomplished.

Yet Puritanism of this type could not possibly last, because, with the defeat of the Armada and the subsequent triumphs over Spain, the danger to which it owed its being had passed away. If you wish to trace the master current of the age which succeeded the defeat of the Armada, you must look far ahead. Think of the great writers of the eighteenth century! Let them defile before your mind's eye, from Addison through Butler to Burke, and ask yourselves whether they have anything in common with the Cartwrights and Traverses of Elizabethan Puritanism. Has the present generation at the close of the nineteenth century anything more in common with it? Let us take a simple test. Amongst the Thomason tracts in the British Museum are many hundreds of Puritan pamphlets and sermons. You are probably familiar with a jest which some years ago was floating about Oxford. Some one, it was said, was asked to choose three books which he would select as his companions in a desert island. He chose the Bible, because it was a good book: 'Robinson Crusoe,' because it was appropriate to the situation: and 'Platonis Opera Omnia,' because you never could get through them. Will any educated man amongst those who boast, and properly boast, that they are the continuators of the higher

Puritan tradition, offer to read one twentieth part of these pamphlets and sermons? I am confident that the alternative of 'Platonis Opera Omnia' would be embraced with avidity.

Was not the current running in the same direction at the end of Elizabeth's reign? The great names of the literature of that age, Hooker, Bacon, and Shakespeare, are not those of men imbued with the Puritan spirit. They look for inspiration to the natural laws to which men and societies are subject, not to a definite framework laid down for everyone to accept positively as it stands. Even Spenser, the poet of imaginative Protestantism, has nothing in common with the specially equipped Puritanism with which we are concerned. In these writers the spirit of the Renaissance, never entirely thrust out of sight, rises again to the surface with renewed force.

It can hardly be doubted that this spirit, if it had been allowed free course, would have been the most powerful solvent of the harsher forms of Puritanism. It is not, however, in this way that historical development usually proceeds. Unjustifiable assertion calls forth assertion equally unjustifiable, and at this crisis the divine right of Presbytery was answered by the divine right of bishops and kings, and the attempt to impose uniformity of belief by imposing uniformity of discipline and ceremonial. The story of the result, when this movement fell into the hands of Laud, is too well known to need repetition.

Though Laud and those who supported him in this direction have met with almost universal obloquy for their hard dealing with their opponents, it will not be amiss to remember that their system, mischievous as it was, was based upon a reaction against Puritan intolerance. The desire to leave as much as possible to be regarded as indifferent, and therefore open to free discussion by intelligent inquirers, is manifested in Laud's letters to Vossius and in his controversy with Fisher, as well as in the new preface to the Articles, which was mainly his work. Nor must it be forgotten that he was the patron of Chillingworth, and was tolerant to the 'ever memorable' John Hales, who was far more of a latitudinarian than Chillingworth himself. In the chain which binds together the forward movement of the age—between Bacon and Locke—Laud has his place, even though that place be a very narrow one.

The weakness of the movement which culminated in Laud's regulations was that it was almost entirely confined to scholars and divines. Under the *régime* of constitutional liberty which exists at the present day no harm could possibly result in a similar case. The small minority holding unpopular opinions would have its say, after which perhaps a few adherents might be attracted, and eventually a larger popular following would be gained. By that time the beliefs at first entertained in the study would lose much of their asperity, and be broadened out by permeating the busy and often ignorant crowd. Unfortunately the political

conceptions of that day, and still more the characters of the two sovereigns who succeeded Elizabeth, were adverse to the chance of a wise treatment of the crisis. James I. to some extent, and still more Charles I., were unable to content themselves with protecting the adherents of the new school from oppression. Under Charles especially all the forces of the Crown were placed at Laud's service, and it was not merely the stricter Puritans, but all who cherished the Protestant spirit, who were revolted by the effort made, with the full support of the King, to enforce certain ecclesiastical forms upon the whole people of England. They naturally forgot that, in 1629, their champions in the House of Commons had attempted to silence every preacher who did not chime in with their own doctrinal scheme. The full tide of Puritanism dashed itself against Charles, strengthened and rendered more stubborn by the obstacles which he had raised to check its course. If those obstacles had not been there, we should have had no revolutionary fervour, no revival of thoughts and beliefs which had originally come into existence in the struggle of the sixteenth century.

Puritanism in its higher or lower aspects had no necessary affinity with Parliamentaryism. Those most imbued with its spirit would have been as ready to withhold obedience from a House of Commons as from a king if it thwarted them in that which they counted as God's cause. For the time being, however, they could count on parliamentary support, if parliaments were ever

again allowed to meet. Those who formed the crowds which in 1637 gathered in Palace Yard to sympathise with Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton while they suffered in the pillory may not all have been adepts in the Calvinistic doctrine, but they were all pronounced enemies of Laud, who had made himself obnoxious in many ways. The popular verdict on Charles's government, moreover, was influenced by a wide-spread dissatisfaction with Charles's government based on other than religious grounds. James, by his want of sympathy with the ideas and prejudices of the nation, had isolated the throne to an extent which would have been intolerable to Elizabeth; more especially when, in the latter part of his reign, he mismanaged his foreign policy, treating great affairs in a small way, and caring more for the territorial losses of his daughter and her husband than for the crisis of continental Protestantism. His attempt to marry his son to a Spanish Infanta sank him even lower in the general estimation.

Matters were yet worse after Charles ascended the throne. When he went to war—first with Spain and afterwards with France—the general inefficiency of a government presided over by himself and his favourite Buckingham inspired disgust, and led to a refusal by the House of Commons to support military and naval preparations from which it expected nothing but disaster. Charles was driven to unconstitutional methods of raising money, and his opponents fell back on the old doctrine that no taxes could be raised with-

out consent of Parliament. In 1628 the King surrendered so far as to grant the Petition of Right, but it soon appeared that there were modes of evading the bondage into which the Parliamentary leaders believed him to have been cast. First it was maintained at Court that the right of levying customs duties under the name of tonnage and poundage was a matter for the royal prerogative, and, some years later, that ship-money might be levied by the same prerogative. Resistance to the payment of taxation is, under all circumstances, likely to be popular. It might be argued, conclusively enough, on the King's side that he could not carry on the government without tonnage and poundage, or defend the country without ship-money. The answer, that if this were so he ought to obtain from Parliament the supplies he needed, was on constitutional grounds more conclusive, and obtained far wider acceptance.

As might have been expected, the two movements—the one aiming at the maintenance, and even at the exclusive maintenance, of a certain form of religion, the other at giving a control over government to the popular House—had long been in a state of fusion, and that fusion was complete when, in 1638, the judges decided that the right of levying ship-money was within the royal prerogative. So close was the union that if Charles resolved not to summon Parliament to vote him the supplies he needed in order to keep up a fleet which, considering the growth of the French navy, was absolutely necessary for the defence of the country, it



was mainly because he feared, with good reason, that Parliament would refuse to grant a penny except on the condition that Laud's system should be swept off the face of the earth.

These English difficulties in the way of Charles's government did not stand alone. He was King of Ireland and Scotland as well as of England.

As far as Ireland was concerned there seemed little chance of effectual opposition to the King's will. The Irish race, indeed, and many who were not of the Irish race, were as firmly attached to the Roman Catholic Church as was the English Puritan to his own creed. In the greater part of Ireland, too, there was estrangement caused by the seizure of lands and the introduction of alien colonists from England or Scotland, to say nothing of the bitter memories of the atrocities committed by Englishmen in the days of Elizabeth. For the present, however, the Irish were held down by an English armed force, and by the iron hand of Wentworth, which pressed with equal force on all sections of the community. It is true that Wentworth's aims were benevolent. He wanted to secure order in the King's name, and to depress alike Celtic chiefs and English officials, but his course was marked by an entire disregard for the feelings of great and small, and his plans were laid, not for the development of the Irish race on its traditional lines, but for assimilating it to the English, whose social and religious progress had been so distinct. Materially Ireland benefited by Wentworth's rule, but its grow-



ing prosperity was hardly likely to be maintained. In the autumn of 1641, after Wentworth had been withdrawn and the English army in Ireland weakened, the demand of the Irish for the restitution of confiscated lands, together with the demand that their religion should be freed from the shackles imposed on it by England, combined in an effort to eject the alien element from Irish soil, and by provoking massacre and civil war rendered necessary the reconquest of the country.

The same regardlessness for popular tendencies marked Charles's dealings with Scotland, but in Scotland there was no English army to check resistance. James's imposition of episcopacy met with little resistance because the Presbyterian forms of Church government were locally untouched. When Charles attempted to force upon Scotland a new prayer-book and new ceremonies, resistance justified itself in the minds of all who were under the influence of religious or ecclesiastical ideas, whilst the nobility, whose incomes had been eked out by the confiscation of church property, threw themselves on the same side, believing their hold upon that property to be endangered by the ecclesiastical propensities of the King, and knowing that the bishops were competing with them for State offices. The discontent of the nobles was of greater effect in Scotland than it could be in England. No Scottish Henry VIII. had brought them low, and they still possessed heritable jurisdictions investing them with the powers of life and death over criminals on their estates.

The Scots accordingly resisted, and in 1639 took arms in self-defence. The English troops brought against them were raw levies. The Scottish host was largely composed of veterans who had fought in Germany in the Thirty Years' War. Charles prudently made peace, but in 1640 the peace was broken. The Scottish army invaded England, defeated a portion of the King's army at Newburn, and occupied Northumberland and Durham. Charles was compelled again to treat. Being driven to bind himself to support the Scottish army of occupation, he had no choice but to summon the English Parliament and ask for the supplies he needed.

The actual revolt of Scotland, like the tendency towards revolt in Ireland, was a national movement. The new prayer-book was detested because it was English, not merely because it was alleged to be Popish. Scotland effectually, Ireland in intention, wanted to be herself, not to be moulded in accordance with the exigencies of her more populous and wealthy neighbour. There have been times when England, regardless of all but her own convenience, and with a supreme contempt for creeds and aims which she has rejected, has put forth her whole strength to bend the sister peoples beneath her yoke. It was not so, as far as Scotland was concerned, when in November 1640, the Long Parliament met. By the immense majority of the English people the Scots were regarded, not as enemies, but as allies.

The Long Parliament during the first months of

its existence occupied a position which no English Parliament had occupied before. Virtually it had an army at its disposal. There was nothing to restrain the Scots in the northern counties from marching upon Westminster if Charles did not pay them, and he could not possibly pay them unless Parliament voted supplies. Consequently he could not venture to dissolve the Long Parliament as he had angrily dissolved the four earlier Parliaments of his reign. Parliament accordingly set itself, before enabling him to send the Scots home, to sweep away the special courts with which the Tudor sovereigns had safeguarded their monarchy—the Court of Star Chamber, the Court of High Commission, the Council of the North. Moreover, Laud was imprisoned, Finch, the Lord Keeper, and Windebank, Secretary of State, driven into exile, and Wentworth, now Earl of Strafford, sent to the scaffold.

After thus obtaining a hold upon the civil government, Parliament turned towards ecclesiastical questions. Under any circumstances it was highly improbable that, in the heat of reaction against Laud's administration, these questions would be considered with the gravity and calmness without which no permanent solution was possible. It would be still easier to go wrong if to the inherent difficulties of the situation there were added difficulties arising from suspicion of the good faith of the King. It is no peculiarity of the English Revolution that such suspicions were entertained. A sovereign deprived of power is so likely

to be dissatisfied with the new situation created for him, that suspicions of his intentions to put forth all his efforts to regain what he has lost are certain to arise in all revolutions which weaken without absolutely destroying the former government. The whole controversy which has raged round the relations between Charles and the Parliament from the time of Strafford's execution until the departure of the King from Westminster has turned on two questions. Did Charles entertain the wish to overthrow the new Parliamentary power by force? Had he, if he did entertain it, the means of giving effect to his design?

Taking the latter question first, it may be remarked that it is upon a negative answer to this that Hallam mainly grounds his decision that the Civil War should have been avoided by Parliament. 'Looking,' as he says, 'from an eminence'—I am afraid there is too much of the 'superior person' in this mode of approaching the case—

We can take a more comprehensive range, and class better the objects before us in their due proportions and in their bearings on one another. It is not easy for us even now to decide, keeping in view the maintenance of the entire constitution, from which party in the civil wars greater mischief was to be apprehended; but the election was, I am persuaded, still more difficult to be made by contemporaries. No one, at least, who has given any time to the study of that history, will deny that among those who fought in opposite battalions at Edgehill and Newbury, or voted in the opposite Parliaments of Westminster

and Oxford, there were many who thought alike on general theories of prerogative and privilege, divided only, perhaps, by some casual prejudices, which had led these to look with greater distrust on courtly insidiousness, and those with greater indignation at popular violence. We cannot believe that Falkland and Culpepper differed greatly in their constitutional principles from Whitelocke and Pierrepont, or that Hertford and Southampton were less friends to a limited monarchy than Essex and Northumberland. . . The real problem that we have to resolve, as to the political justice of the civil war, is not the character, the past actions, or even the existing designs of Charles ; not even whether he had as justly forfeited his crown as his son was deemed to have done for less violence and less insincerity ; not even, I will add, whether the liberties of his subjects could have been absolutely secure under his government ; but whether the risk attending his continuance upon the throne with the limited prerogatives of an English sovereign were great enough to counter-balance the miseries of protracted civil war, the perils of defeat, and the no less perils, as experience has shown, of victory.

How easily Macaulay, whose judgment of a political situation was as superb as his judgment of personal character was weak, disposes of this argument ! Commenting, not on this passage alone, but on the whole lengthened chain of reasoning which preceded it, he falls upon its weakest point, a passage in which Hallam had expressed his belief that the best solution of the final problem would have been for England to do without a militia at all.

Mr Hallam [he writes] thinks that the dispute might easily have been compromised by enacting that the King should have no power to keep a standing army on foot without the consent of Parliament. He reasons as if the question had been merely theoretical, and as if at that time no army had been wanted. 'The kingdom,' he says, 'might well have dispensed, in that age, with any military organisation.' Now we think that Mr. Hallam overlooks the most important circumstance in the whole case. Ireland was actually in rebellion, and a great expedition would obviously be necessary to reduce that kingdom to obedience. The Houses had therefore to consider, not an abstract question of law, but an urgent practical question directly involving the safety of the State. They had to consider the expediency of immediately giving a great army to a King who was at least as desirous to put down the Parliament of England as to conquer the insurgents of Ireland.

To this there is little to add, except that every fresh investigation conducted since Macaulay's day has served to strengthen the force of his reasoning. The historian cannot deal, as he conclusively argues, with 'an abstract question of law,' unless he takes other considerations into account. He has to do, not with speculative constitutional phraseology, but with the living forces of a past generation moulding constitutional rules to suit the urgency of the time, and being influenced in turn by the constitutional rules inherited from the past. The development of popular power did not come because the House of Commons took advantage of the King's weakness to acquire new powers, but because it was alarmed lest the King should be able to enforce his own

will on the nation. Whether or no it would have been well that he should have succeeded must be left for consideration in a future lecture.

It is unnecessary to say much on the question whether Charles contemplated the overthrow of the new parliamentary power by force, if he could have such force at his disposal. So strong has been the evidence produced of late years in the affirmative that it is hardly conceivable that anyone will now be found to argue, as some years ago was seriously argued, that the tales of plots with which Charles was said to have been concerned during these critical months were invented, for political purposes, by Pym. If there be any left to maintain that the evidence of those plots was collected by Charles's adversaries, they may be silenced by a document which has recently come to light in the Vatican archives. The writer, Rossetti, was the Pope's agent at the court of Henrietta Maria, and was obliged to leave the country in June 1641 at the instance of the House of Commons. Having been appointed Papal Nuncio at Cologne, he continued to forward to Rome accounts of the English Court, mainly derived from the Queen's confessor, Father Robert Philips. Writing early in 1642, when he had just heard of the King's halt at Hampton Court, whither Charles had gone on his way round London after seeing the Queen off to the Continent, Rossetti bethinks him of comparing his actual position with that of the preceding spring, when the liberation of Strafford was in question :



The King [he writes], having retired to Hampton Court, thought of betaking himself at once to —, <sup>1</sup> a pleasure house in the country in the direction of Yorkshire, on the road to Portsmouth. This gives rise to a good deal of thought in those who were acquainted with his former plans, as their Majesties resolved to go to Hampton Court at the time when the cause of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland was in agitation, and they desired to save him from death in some way or other. In the meanwhile, people were to be sent to surprise the Tower of London, Parliament was to be broken up, and the King and Queen, having already gained over a good part of the royal army, were to retire to Portsmouth, a strong place on the sea—the strongest in these realms. In this way, as was believed, the Lord Lieutenant would be freed, and would then advance with the army towards London, and give the law to those who wanted to destroy him, it being hoped that this would be effected the more successfully with the help of aid from Ireland and Holland, landed, if not elsewhere, then at the aforesaid port. But whilst their Majesties were prepared to carry out these designs, a courier arrived with advices that the Governor of Portsmouth [Goring] had given the place up into the hands of Parliament, though he had sworn fidelity to the King. At the same time news came that the Lieutenant of the Tower [Sir W. Balfour] refused to give up its keys to his Majesty, whilst the people made ready to go to Whitehall, or even to Hampton Court if necessary, to force his Majesty to sign the death-sentence of the Lord Lieutenant. By these events their Majesties were necessitated to change their plans, at least as regarded their departure, because in consequence of these treasons they had no fitting place to which they could retire. Yet

<sup>1</sup> A blank is left in the original despatch. Perhaps Windsor is intended. The geographical indications are vague.



his Majesty constantly affirmed that he would rather have lost his hand than have had to sign that sentence, for which reason some modification was found to qualify the mode of signature, so that the Lord Lieutenant was put to death in the end. On this it was resolved to let the madness of the Puritans take its course, *but to persist in the resolutions which had already been resolved on*, attempting in course of time to gain the Tower of London, to make sure again of Portsmouth, to negotiate with the Irish, and to labour that the Prince of Orange be urged to give assistance to the movement of this machine, which being a great one demands time to move it in an orderly fashion. At present some think that the King may now be near Portsmouth, having taken with him the Queen,<sup>1</sup> the Prince and the Princess, and having also carried with him the jewels. The prognostics are not so desperate, because there is a considerable body of troops on the King's side, and if he is in a strong place holding good intelligence with his friends in London, he may yet be in a commanding position ; and when this is attempted by force of arms, the Englishman, and especially the Puritan, will give way without difficulty, and the Parliament will perhaps be quickly dissolved, so that there is reason to believe that the royal authority may in some manner regain its ancient vigour, and if it pleases God that this may be brought about, it may be thought that the Catholic religion may find relief.

If not by Charles's own mouth, at least by the mouth of one who was acquainted with his secret designs, *Habemus confitentem reum*.

<sup>1</sup> She had sailed a week before this letter was written.

## LECTURE II

## CROMWELL IN THE CIVIL WAR

IF the struggle between King and Parliament had been a mere clash of competing forces, it would awaken no more interest at the present day than the squabbles of the Fronde. It was because the spear of Parliamentarism was tipped with Puritanism that the strife appeals to all who are attracted by the spectacle of unselfish human emotion resolving itself into action. Of the revolutionary spirit as a whole, Cromwell may fairly be taken as the representative man, not because he rose to supreme authority in its course, but because he added to an intense Puritan feeling—gradually shaking off the grosser elements which were choking it—a stirring eagerness for the public good apart from religious considerations.

(Oliver Cromwell was born at Huntingdon in 1599, and was consequently of an age in the early years of Charles's reign to take an interest in public affairs. In 1616 he became an undergraduate at Cambridge. It was probably in the following year that his father's death recalled him home, where his care of his widowed mother and her family, and his practical work—the man-

agement of land—gained him reputation amongst his neighbours. At some time during the following years he experienced a religious change, and it was impossible that such a change should take other than a Puritan turn, as the new Laudian school had little hold upon the gentry and farmers of the country districts. In Cromwell the change was not from vice to piety, but from the joyous and somewhat boisterous life of healthy youth to the sober self-restraint of the developed man living in the constant assurance of God's love manifested to himself personally, and of God's guidance leading him amongst the pitfalls of human life. So highly was he respected that in 1628 he was chosen by his neighbours to represent Huntingdon in the Parliament which signalised itself by the Petition of Right. We may be sure that as <sup>his</sup> ~~Hampden's~~ cousin he was welcomed by the leaders of that stirring Parliament, but it is significant that while, as far as we know, he spoke no word on behalf of the Petition of Right, his one recorded utterance in 1629 was called out by the interference of Bishop Neile with a Puritan clergyman who refused to stain his mouth with 'tenets of Popery.' To the end of his life Cromwell was interested first in religion, and then in politics. Constitutional questions he never thoroughly mastered, and was on the whole indifferent to them.

It is also noticeable that Cromwell kept quiet during the years in which Charles was governing without a Parliament. He is not heard of as resisting the pay-

ment of ship-money, nor even as setting at defiance the ecclesiastical courts. Clearly he was no ambitious fire-brand, but a man under authority whose aim it was to carry obedience to the utmost limits consistent with his personal duty. This, too, is characteristic of the man, and displays itself again and again in his prolonged hesitations to break with established institutions. In his conservative dislike of hasty changes, combined with a religion influencing the conduct as well as the creed, Cromwell was a fair representative of the better part of England ; none the less because when once his reluctance to step forward had been vanquished, he was capable of administering heavy blows against those who blocked the way too persistently even for his patience, and because when once he had broken with the past, no going back was any longer possible for him.

The year 1640 was a turning-point for Cromwell, as for England herself. As member for the borough of Cambridge he took his place in the Long Parliament, and, as might have been expected, took a silent part in sweeping away the special safeguards to the political power of the King which had been bequeathed by the Tudors to the Stuarts. In the later part of the following year, when religious questions occupied Parliament, and when Hyde and Falkland, with almost half of the House of Commons behind them, pleaded for the preservation of a reformed episcopacy, Cromwell threw in his lot with those who demanded that Church government and Church worship should be more completely recast.

The Grand Remonstrance, in which this demand was made, also asked that the King should employ only such ministers of state as Parliament might confide in. To the passing of the Remonstrance Cromwell attached immense importance. 'If,' he said to Falkland, after the division had been taken, 'the Remonstrance had been rejected, I would have sold all I had the next morning, and never have seen England any more; and I know there are many other honest men of the same resolution.' In later times there have been many writers who have sympathised with Hyde and Falkland rather than with Cromwell. They are aware that Hyde and Falkland were averse to the restoration of the Laudian church system, and that they were equally averse to the erection of a Presbyterian church system, which bid fair to be as despotic over the intellect as the rule of Laud had been over practice. Some sort of toleration, it is urged, might have been evolved out of the existing chaos by a party led by Hyde and Falkland. The party to which Cromwell had attached himself, and of which Pym was the Parliamentary leader, aimed at nothing of the kind. These men desired to establish Puritan supremacy, without leaving any room for worship differing from their own in any part of the country. They had no mind, as Pym said, 'to relax the golden reins of discipline.' Those who argue in this way fail to appreciate the crucial fact of the situation. Pym and Cromwell had not to deal with Hyde and Falkland, but with the King. Those who have read Rossetti's

despatch quoted in the preceding lecture, can have no further doubt, not merely that the King was not to be trusted—that is acknowledged by all except a few Royalist fanatics—but that he intended to take every step to restore himself to power by means of foreign armies. Therefore the Grand Remonstrance contained two, and only two, demands. The practical interpretation of the one was that parliamentary government should be substituted for royal government; of the other, that a system in which the appointment of Bishops who might enforce anti-Puritan ceremonialism in the Church rested with a distrusted King should in some way or another come to an end. It is likely enough that there were members of the House to whom one of these propositions was more important than the other. The general result was that Parliamentarism and Puritanism went hand in hand.

Like an English judge who contents himself with deciding the case before him without launching out into the consideration of general principles, Cromwell by his vote struck at the actual danger of the time, without thought of any risk which might possibly arise from the victory of the cause he espoused. What he averred by his vote he was prepared to defend with his sword. When the Civil War broke out, he gathered round him the men of his own neighbourhood and was the life of the Eastern Association. Learning from professional soldiers what it was that constituted a good cavalry force, he set himself, as a captain, to drill the men of

his troop, but not before he had carefully selected them from amongst those stern Puritans whose heart, like his own, was in the Parliamentary cause, because it was the cause of Puritanism. There is no reason to suppose that he ever uttered the words traditionally ascribed to him: 'Trust in God and keep your powder dry!' but they represent, more fully perhaps than any phrase which actually passed his lips, the union of religious zeal and practical energy which characterised him. At Edgehill, when all the rest of the cavalry was swept away by Rupert and Wilmot, his troop with two others had the good fortune to find shelter behind the unbroken portion of the Parliamentary infantry, and he was thus enabled to do good service in the course of the battle. When he rose to be the Colonel of a regiment of horse, and afterwards the Lieutenant-General in command of the cavalry of Manchester's army, he maintained the principles under which his troop had been formed and disciplined. What that discipline was is best exhibited by the conduct of his horse outside Gainsborough in 1643. Surprised by Newcastle's whole army, it retreated by alternate troops, one showing a bold face to the enemy whilst the other drew off the field, till the whole body was in safety within the walls.

Cromwell had shown himself the best cavalry officer in England; and, as matters then stood, to be the best cavalry officer was to be the best soldier. Infantry dared not cross open country save under a cavalry



escort, and on the field of battle a commander to whom nothing but cavalry remained could, without difficulty, overpower a commander to whom nothing but infantry remained. It was thus that, in 1644, Marston Moor was won; but that the battle was brought to this pass was the special merit of Cromwell. The Royal horse drove the Parliamentary horse of the right wing off the field. The Parliamentary horse under Cromwell on the left wing also drove the Royal horse opposed to it off the field. The victorious Royalist commander vanished in pursuit from the scene of action. Cromwell, prompt to grasp the whole of the facts in presence of which he found himself, pulled up, and turning upon the Royal foot-soldiers, at that moment on the point of victory over the hard-pressed infantry opposed to them, crushed them before cavalry could return to their assistance. As soldier or statesman this quality of knowing when to pull up was a distinguishing feature of Cromwell's character. His soldiership may serve to elucidate his policy. A man's character may develop as he is called to act under new circumstances, but it never suffers a radical change.

No soldier in the struggle in which Cromwell was engaged could be a soldier and nothing more. The men who fought at Marston Moor on the Parliamentary side had been civilians two years before, and hoped to be civilians again before many more years had passed. Upon them, as well as upon the statesmen who guided the course of events from Westminster, the war acted



as a dissolvent of old ideas and the originator of new ones.

Its first result had been to draw yet closer the bonds of the stricter Puritanism. In 1643, when failure threatened the Parliamentary arms, Pym was driven to call the Scots to his aid, and to pay them the price which they demanded. That price was the Solemn League and Covenant, which imposed upon England the Presbyterian system of Church discipline with its accompanying rigidity of doctrine. There are moments of crisis when fresh battalions appear to be the one thing needful. Though the crisis passed away with Marston Moor, Presbyterianism did not pass away. It was there at least in a threatening shape, though as yet not embodied in parliamentary legislation. It was unacceptable to Englishmen, who had risen against the enforcement of the Laudian uniformity of ceremonial, and who would be inclined to rise against a Presbyterian uniformity of creed. The only question was whether resistance would fall into the hands of the divines who surrounded Charles at Oxford, or whether the spirit of a nobler Puritanism would be able to shake itself free from the elements which had restricted its development and take the lead in the national progress.

For the time at least it was an enlightened Puritanism that took the lead. To the practical mind of Cromwell, looking about for the surest means of bringing the war to a successful conclusion, the first thing to be done was to

free the army from the Presbyterian yoke. To beat the King, the best officers attainable were needed, and how was he to get them if he was compelled to reject this man as an Independent and the other man as a Baptist? For the theory of toleration he cared little. An Episcopalian was to him a servant of Charles, and, as such, an enemy of Parliament and of God; but amongst those who were the King's enemies, his choice must be free. 'Sir,' he wrote to a Presbyterian officer who had objected to his employment of a Baptist officer, 'the State, in choosing men to serve it, takes no notice of their opinions; if they be willing faithfully to serve it, that satisfies.' Cromwell, coming to the question from this merely practical point of view, had opened the eyes of his mind. As far as he was personally concerned he had taken away the reproach of Puritanism. The strict repression of thought and action which had driven Laud into his formalities, and which had terrified the sensitive heart of Falkland, was to pass away, and the freer intellectual inquiry in which Bacon had led the way was to be admitted into the Puritan sanctuary.

Such a thing was possible for Cromwell because he was a man of deep religious feeling as well as a practical soldier. It was possible for the nobler spirits amongst the Puritans of the day. Religious and secular freedom was the theme which exercised the most thoughtful writers of the day. Robinson's 'Liberty of Conscience,' Williams' 'Bloody Tenent of Persecution,' and Milton's 'Areopagitica' were all issued in 1644. The

new doctrine of religious liberty for sectarian associations—the aim of Chillingworth and Falkland had been merely to secure the liberty of thought—found an appropriate organ in the elastic polity of Independency, in which each congregation was its own master, and was consequently able to develop on its own lines, without taking thought for the maintenance of coercive jurisdiction over congregations which developed in other directions. The national importance of Independency dates from 1644, because it offered a home to all who in that year recoiled alike from the bonds of Presbyterianism and the bonds of Episcopacy. It became almost synonymous with the spirit of Toleration.

Pym had died before the end of 1643, and it looked as if his work was being undone before he had been a year in his grave. Yet in one, and that the most important, respect Cromwell was but the successor of Pym. Both were bent on the continuation of the war till the King had been brought upon his knees. In 1644, as in 1641, the division was between those who suspected the King and those who did not. The Presbyterian constitutionalists—the Essexes, the Manchesters, the Holleses—dreamed of seeing Charles restored to the name without the reality of power, gratefully accepting the advice of Parliament, and concurring in the enforcement of Presbyterian discipline in the Church. It could not be; Charles's virtues and failings alike rendered such a consummation impossible, and it was the merit of Cromwell and the Independents to see that it

was impossible. Of the alternatives before them—submission to the King and to all that a royal restoration would bring with it, and a war to the destruction of one party or the other—they preferred the latter. Cromwell especially denounced the view that it was unwise to 'beat the King too much' lest he should be useless as a constitutional sovereign. Like all true soldiers, he felt that it was the business of a commander to defeat the enemy without troubling himself about what would come after the victory. For this he quarrelled with Manchester and the other Presbyterian generals. For this he favoured the Self-Denying Ordinance which, as it was first framed, would have shut out all members of either House, himself included, from a command in the field. For this, too, he supported the scheme of reconstructing the army, so as to place at its head a body of professional officers, who would fight strenuously with the sole object of crushing the enemy.

In 1645 the New Model army came into existence. Much that has been said of that army has no evidence behind it. The majority of the soldiers were pressed men, selected because they had strong bodies, and not because of their religion. The remainder were taken out of the armies already in existence. On the other hand it must be remembered that the least Puritan counties in England were subject to the King, and that in consequence the percentage of Puritans amongst the recruits must have been greater than it would have been if the men had been selected from the whole

country. The distinctive feature of the New Model, however, was its officers. All existing commands having been vacated, men of a distinctly Puritan and, for the most part, of an Independent type were appointed to their places. Fairfax was named General, and Cromwell, whose services were too valuable to be lost, was authorised to serve under him as Lieutenant-General in command of the horse. The strictest discipline was enforced, and the soldiers, whether Puritan or not, were thus brought firmly under the control of officers bent upon the one object of defeating the King. At Naseby this object was accomplished.

From a military point of view Naseby was but a repetition of Marston Moor. A second time Cromwell, after defeating the cavalry opposed to him, pulled up and turned upon the King's infantry, which was left unguarded by horse. The victory enabled Cromwell to urge Parliament to grant liberty of conscience for 'the honest men' who had fought to such purpose: 'He that ventures his life for the liberty of his country, I wish he trust God for the liberty of his conscience, and you for the liberty he fights for.'

In 1646 Charles, hopeless of military success, surrendered himself to the Scottish army, and was conveyed by it to Newcastle. Then followed a series of unedifying negotiations. Charles was too high-minded to change his religion to please the Scots and the English Presbyterians, but not too high-minded to inspire hopes which he never meant to fulfil. Early in

1647 the Scottish army, having bargained with the English Parliament for the pay due to it, re-crossed the Tweed, leaving Charles to be removed to Holmby House.

With the surrender of the King it seemed as if a chapter of English history had been closed. There no longer appeared to be reason to dread the restoration of the King's authority as it had been conceived by Charles I., or of the Church establishment as it had been conceived by Laud. It might therefore be expected that the tide which had set in the direction of Parliamentarism and Puritanism, would abate somewhat of its force, whilst there was room for the growth of a new crop of sentiments directed against what was coming to be felt as the special evil of the time—the burden of a large army which had no longer any visible reason for its existence. Of these sentiments the Presbyterian party constituted itself the voice, and, if it had been possessed of an ordinary amount of prudence, it might very well have become the master of the situation. Its leaders, however—such men as Holles and Clotworthy—were men without a grain of statesmanship, the basis of which is the power to recognise existing facts, and they under-estimated, on the one hand, the difficulty of inducing the King to accept Presbyterian government in the Church and Parliamentary government in the State, and, on the other hand, the difficulty of inducing the army to admit of disbandment on any terms that they were ready to offer.

The dealings of the Presbyterians, who formed the

majority in both Houses, with the army in the first half of 1647 may be taken as an example of almost unexampled stupidity. They began with an attempt to get rid of Cromwell, by a vote directing that, with the single exception of Fairfax, no officer above the rank of Colonel should be employed in the army. To this Cromwell bowed his head, even offering to take service in Germany under the Elector Palatine. Then came the question of inducing a considerable part of the army to transfer itself to Ireland, and of bringing about the disbandment of a great part of the remainder. The one chance the Presbyterians had of accomplishing this double object was to raise a loan in order that they might have money in hand to pay off the soldiers they dismissed. Yet, with incredible folly, they did not even attempt to do anything of the kind. Large numbers of the soldiers had no great interest in ecclesiastical or political ideas, and would contentedly have returned to their homes if only the pay justly due to them had been secured. As it was, finding that they were to receive no more than a fraction of what was owing to them, the regiments with one accord closed their ranks against the Presbyterian bunglers, and the whole armed force became an instrument ready for the hands of those who, whether officers or private soldiers, sought to wring from Parliament the concession of religious liberty.

Upon this the army transformed itself into a political entity, the motions of which were directed by an



army council composed of officers and of agitators—that is to say, agents of the regiments. Lest the Presbyterians, aided by the Scots, who were now acting as their allies, should use the royal authority for the establishment of their own intolerant ecclesiastical system, the army sent Cornet Joyce to take possession of the King's person, and afterwards compelled Parliament to expel the eleven leading Presbyterian members, thereby depriving that party of the authority which it had shown itself incapable of using to advantage.

In the second half of 1647, the army brought forward its own constitutional plan of settlement with the King in *The Heads of the Proposals*, which was mainly the work of Ireton. As far as political requirements were concerned, the system proposed was not very different from that favoured by the Presbyterians. The King was, for a time at least, to sink into the position of a puppet, whose strings were to be pulled by Parliament. It was in their ecclesiastical scheme that the army leaders were truly original. The episcopal system was to remain untouched, but the bishops were no longer to exercise coercive jurisdiction. There was to be complete religious liberty for those who wished to remain outside the pale of the episcopal church. The scheme was an anticipation of the settlement of 1689. For that very reason, the King would not hear of it. He objected to becoming a puppet, and he objected to the lopping off of the bishops' powers.



To do without Charles or to take him at his own valuation was the alternative forced on all who, from time to time, negotiated with him, and the army had now to learn the lesson. The process involved the conviction that the political system must be reconstructed from head to foot. The movement which had hitherto carried all before it in opposition to Charles and the bishops had, it will be remembered, been inspired by the double idea of Parliamentaryism and Puritanism, which again resolved itself into the conviction that the nation should be governed by its representatives, and that certain beliefs were to be upheld because they were true and wholesome. So far the result had been that not only had the King refused to fall in with the current, but that a majority of the members of Parliament, with more or less emphasis, had at one time or other supported him, or were prepared to support him. Nearly half of the members of the House of Commons and more than half of the House of Lords had joined Charles in the Civil War, whilst a majority of the remainder were now playing into his hands through their inability to grasp the political situation.

It therefore occurred to a little knot of men who came to be known as Levellers, amongst whom the most prominent personage was John Lilburne, a man argumentative and litigious, prompt to find causes of offence, but no less prompt to sacrifice his individual welfare for the public cause, that the occasion required

drastic treatment of the Parliament as well as of the King. If Parliament went wrong it was because it did not represent the nation, and a new Parliament must be called into existence which would really represent it.

In *The Agreement of the People*, as presented by these men in October 1647, the demand already made in *The Heads of the Proposals* for biennial Parliaments, elected by the people after a re-distribution of seats, was repeated, and, though nothing was said about the franchise in that document, Lilburne and his followers called for manhood suffrage as the only true solution of the constitutional problem. The aim of the Levellers was the transference of power from Parliaments elected on an antiquated system to the nation as a whole.

To substitute the nation for the traditional authority of the King was intelligible enough, but if no more was done, it might easily land the promoters of the Agreement in an unpleasant position. Authority has its limits, and even at the present day we are aware that with all our submissiveness to an Act of Parliament, there might possibly be Acts to which it would be the duty of many of us to refuse obedience. If such a resolve seldom, if ever, comes into practical consideration, it is mainly because respect for individual conscience has so sunk into the minds of the mass of the people that it is unlikely that Parliaments, as at present constituted, will pass Acts which many will feel called on to disobey. It was not so in the seventeenth century. There was just as much danger that a

Parliament elected by manhood suffrage—or, indeed, one elected by a suffrage more restricted—would refuse to acknowledge the claims of Puritanism to supremacy, as that a restored King would set himself against it. Hence the problem to be faced in 1647 was not merely the settlement of the old dispute between King and Parliament, but also the settlement of a new dispute between those who respectively followed one or other of the two tendencies of the Revolution itself, the establishment of national authority and the establishment of Puritanism.

The solution offered by the Levellers was decidedly ingenious. Grasping at the idea—prevalent in the struggle against the monarchy—of fundamental laws which were never to be changed, they inserted in the Agreement a provision that certain matters, such as religious liberty, must not be touched by Parliament. *The Agreement of the People* was thus the first example of a written constitution.

There remained to be considered the way of obtaining general acceptance for the plan. In every age authority rests upon one or other of two bases, or, as is far more common in progressive societies, upon a combination of both. There is the basis of reverence for that which exists by custom, and the basis of reverence for the will of the people. The Levellers proposed to refer almost all matters relating to government to the will of the people. What they reserved was no body of traditionary custom endeared to the hearts of the

people by long use and wont, but things absolutely new, such as complete religious liberty. Moreover the new constitution had to be set on foot. The old Parliament was certain to reject it, and it was highly probable that a new Parliament, elected by manhood suffrage, would reject it with no less decision.

Against this difficulty no provision was made in the Agreement itself, but, as far as can be gathered from the title of the document and from some expressions of its promoters, it was intended to offer the new constitution for general acceptance, and to disfranchise those who refused to express their accordance with its principles. Its promoters—with the zeal of enthusiasts—probably expected that it would be accepted by the majority of the population. They forgot that, even if their anticipations proved true, vast numbers of those who accepted it in order to secure a vote might be quite ready afterwards to toss its conclusions to the winds.

To Cromwell this flinging away of all respect for established institutions was most distasteful. Without any constitutional learning, still more without any philosophical training, he instinctively turned against a proposal to cast the institutions of the country into the melting pot, after the fashion practised by the makers of modern France a century and a half later. Those who presented an ideal constitution might satisfy themselves, but what likelihood was there that they would satisfy others? 'If,' he said at a meeting of soldiers and civilians in Putney Church, 'we could leap

out of one condition into another that had so specious things in it as this hath, I suppose there would not be much dispute; though perhaps some of these things may be very well disputed; and how do we know if, whilst we are disputing these things, another company of men shall gather together, and they shall put out a paper as plausible as this? I do not know why it may not be done by that time you have agreed upon this, or got hands to it, if that be the way; and not only another and another, but many of this kind; and if so, what do you think the consequence of that would be? Would it not be confusion? Would it not make England like the Switzerland country, one canton of the Swiss against another, and one country against another?’

Cromwell, in short, was for that which has been the characteristic feature in English political history, the policy of bit-by-bit reform; his opponents for taking advantage of the temporary supremacy of the army to establish a brand new constitution upon the ruins of the old.

That Cromwell's view would prevail in the end there could be little doubt. His tentative method was too much in accordance with the processes of nature to be utterly swept away. Yet it did not follow that he would be able to enforce his idea in the immediate present. He asked that the King and the House of Lords should be taken into account, and neither King nor House of Lords would consent to be taken into

account unless upon their own terms. By his flight to Carisbrooke Charles practically announced that he was not willing to accept conditions from the army, and Cromwell, though a few days later he beat down a mutiny in which the soldiers stood up for *The Agreement of the People*, was compelled a fortnight later to abandon, at least for the time, all hope of working out the salvation of the country with Charles's help. How unwillingly he did it is manifest by the frequent recurrence in his mind, up to the very last, of the hope that Charles might still be won.

It was but natural that the causes which made Cromwell hesitate to break violently with the past should make for a Royalist restoration. What he desired politically was precisely that which most English people at the time desired—a King who would allow himself to be controlled on decisive points by Parliament, not by a dominant army. As long as Charles was there this end could never be attained, and the Second Civil War resulted from division of opinion between those who recognised this fact and those who did not. To some the power of the army was so hateful that they were willing to risk the chance of winning a Parliamentary constitution from Charles after they had given him the victory. To others, Charles was so dangerous that they were willing to risk the chance of winning a Parliamentary constitution from the army if the soldiers proved victorious.

Yet in this second struggle, as in the earlier ones,

the Parliamentary constitution was by no means everything that was at stake. Men on either side wanted not only to achieve a victory for King or Parliament, but to maintain their own principles in the teeth of King or Parliament. They were faithful to Episcopacy and the Book of Common Prayer, to the Presbyterian discipline, or to Independency and toleration within certain wide limits, a fidelity which, as matters stood, was likely to clash with any political system entertained by any given individual.

If in the midst of all this welter Cromwell stands supreme, it is not because of his capacity for leading the nation into the course on which it was ultimately to proceed, nor even because of his practical sagacity, but by reason of the largeness of his mind, hospitable to all the various aspirations of his countrymen. He saw dimly, as in a mist, the varied elements of progress. Though he could not himself combine them in a coherent whole, he could at least strike down with a heavy blow that one which, at any given moment, threatened to overpower the rest.

## LECTURE III

## THE COMMONWEALTH AND THE THREE NATIONS

FOR the understanding of Cromwell's character the glimpses afforded by the report of the proceedings of the Army Council in 1647 have a special interest. Only a few accounts of the many discussions in which he took part have been handed down to us, and of those few this is by far the most remarkable. Into the debates of the Council of State after the establishment of the Commonwealth, or of the Council of the Protectorate in later years, scarcely a ray of light has penetrated. The result of our ignorance has been that though Cromwell's moderating influence has been sufficiently revealed in his actions, his long hesitations, his patience in the face of opposition, and his reluctance to break loose from established authority, have been obscured in the popular imagination. In the place of the true image of the man has arisen one of a high-handed despotic ruler, winning his way to power as some think by his force of character, as others think by the unscrupulousness of the means he adopted, but at all events wielding with a heavy hand the power he had gained, and swiftly brushing opposition from his



path. The mistake has arisen not from an entire misconception of Cromwell's nature, but from imagining that the character he revealed in special crises was always equally manifested in the daily conduct of his life.

In some sort Cromwell is best understood by fixing his relations to the two great tendencies of the Revolution. In his nature the destructive aims of Puritanism were most clearly revealed. He was intolerant of everything opposed to the highest and most spiritual religion, and of the forms which, as he thought, choked and hindered its development. With a strong arm he pronounced a distinct negative to everything persistently antagonistic to what he regarded as the interest of the people of God. After the Battle of Marston Moor he reported with the highest approbation the dying words of one of his officers: 'One thing lay on his spirit: that God had not suffered him to be any more the executioner of His enemies.' Armed with this faith, Cromwell himself struck blow after blow. He dashed down Laud's mitre and Charles's throne; he was foremost in sending Charles himself to the scaffold; in later years he destroyed Parliament after Parliament. Nor was it merely that his blows were hard. The noticeable thing about them was that they were permanently successful. Never again did there appear in England a persecuting Church supporting itself on royal absolutism; a monarchy resting its claims solely on divine right; a Parliament defying the constituencies

by which it had been elected as well as the Government by which it had been summoned. Constitutionalists might challenge the Negative Voice as claimed by Charles to obstruct reform. Cromwell exercised it in right of conformity with the permanent requirements of the nation.

With the other tendency of the times, that towards Parliamentaryism, he was certainly not formally in sympathy. He fought for Parliament against the King, not because it was a representative body, but because it was an authority sheltering the principles he championed. He did not, in short, regard it as absolutely essential that a nation should be governed in all times and under all circumstances by a representative assembly. For all that, no man ever appeared more warmly in defence of the two bases on which Parliamentary government can alone prosper: liberty of thought and speech, so far as is consistent with the security of the State, and the committal of the decision in doubtful cases to argument, thrusting the employment of force as far as possible into the background. If ever there was a man who suffered fools gladly, who sought to influence and persuade, and who was ready to get something tolerable done by consent rather than get something better done by forcing it on unwilling minds, that man was Cromwell.

When the Second Civil War was brought to an end by the victory at Preston and the reduction of Colchester, the King's supporters in Parliament were ejected by military violence and his trial and execution promptly

followed. Cromwell cast about for the means of saving him, but in the end he too gave way, and cried for judgment more loudly than anyone else. A King who dealt in equivocations, and could never be trusted to give frankly what he conceded in appearance, must be restrained from doing harm, and the army as a whole, and Cromwell in particular, at last came to the conclusion, to use the expression employed by Essex when Strafford's trial was pending, that stone dead hath no fellow.

We know now that though Charles I. was put to death, Charles II. was restored eleven years later, and that King and Parliament came to terms which eventually resulted in the predominance of Parliament. Yet it is impossible to blame the men by whom this consummation was resisted for so many years. If they did not keep out the restored kingship, they did secure that it should not be a monarchy imposed on England by armed force from without or armed insurrection within. In this, too, Cromwell's permanent work is again seen to be purely negative.

Naturally, neither he nor those who acted with him wished it to be so. In a second edition of *The Agreement of the People* presented to the House of Commons a little before the King's execution, they strove to lay the foundations of a Commonwealth without King or House of Lords. The document was compounded out of the first *Agreement of the People* and *The Heads of the Proposals*. Supreme power was to be entrusted

to a Parliament elected biennially by household suffrage, and sitting for seven months only in the two years. Its powers were limited by certain reservations, notably by one relating to religious liberty, on which Parliament was to be incompetent to legislate. The executive authority was to be exercised by a Council of State chosen by Parliament and acting under its control.

The existing House of Commons was quite ready to abolish kingship and the House of Lords, and so far the programme of the army was adopted. The House, however, was unwilling to dissolve itself, partly, no doubt, because its members liked to retain power, partly also because they did not think it advisable to change the basis of authority in the midst of a revolution, on the principle enunciated in somewhat similar circumstances by an American President, that it is not well to swop horses in the middle of a stream. It was by Cromwell's influence that they obtained this measure of grace. It was he who persuaded his brother officers to content themselves with the bare presentation of the Agreement to the House, without insisting on its being immediately carried into practice.

One result of this was to strengthen the party of Lilburne and the Levellers. It was obvious that the existing House—now styling itself the Parliament of England—was a mere oligarchy, and that even if the proposals of the army were adopted, supreme power would still be vested in a selected part of the male inhabitants of the country, while for seventeen months

out of every twenty-four the government would be conducted by a small Council of State. Accordingly Lilburne issued in his own name a third version of *The Agreement of the People*, providing for an annual Parliament elected by manhood suffrage, sitting, except for short adjournments, all the year round, and appointing a committee to carry on absolutely necessary executive functions under its own immediate supervision. The action of Parliament would still be checked by reservations, but the main hindrance to its acquisition of despotic power lay in the frequency of elections, coupled with a stipulation that no member of one Parliament should be qualified for a seat in the next.

Unpractical as Lilburne was, his scheme had at least one merit. Political society cannot hold together unless it is based on something admittedly above discussion, and therefore capable of securing that continuity in the midst of progress which is the real defence of nations against anarchy. Up to this point the right of kings, whether divine or constitutionally human, had furnished such a basis of agreement. In the future the sovereignty of the nation was to take its place. It is to Lilburne's credit that he recognised that nothing else could take its place. It was his misfortune—or, if we like to say so, his fault—that he did not recognise how slow must be the process of changing from one basis to the other; how, too, whilst the change was being effected, the nation could only

he saved from disruption by keeping up the notion of kingship as the central force of government in gradually diminishing distinctness, till, as in a dissolving view, the notion of national sovereignty should slowly evolve itself in the popular mind. It was mainly Cromwell's sense that continuity of government was necessary which was at the bottom of his opposition to Lilburne. Yet it would be absurd to suppose that he realised this distinctly. He was neither a prophet nor a scientific politician. It was enough that he felt instinctively that whilst the Levelling theories broke up the existing frame of society, they substituted nothing practicable for them. He put his foot firmly down at Burford, crushed the mutinous regiments which had declared in favour of the Levellers, thus establishing the rule of the truncated Parliament on a military basis. Once more he had asserted himself in the negative. There was to be no theoretical shifting of power from one basis to another. He did not know that the work done at Burford frustrated his own aims even more than the aims of the Levellers. A nation cannot exist without a theory, however much it may be veiled, because only a theory makes agreement possible. Cromwell merely adopted one idea after another which seemed at the time likely to work well in practice. What if his practical considerations came to mean, in the eyes of the people, no more than military control?

It is no wonder that Cromwell's success in the battlefield was not followed by permanent political success.

In delivering his blows at Marston Moor and Naseby, Cromwell had crushed opposition because he realised all the essential facts of the situation before him, and because he possessed the swiftness of comprehension which enabled him to see—what is seen by few—the relative importance of those facts. His task in dealing with politics was much more difficult. The facts on which his judgment was to be based were far more numerous, and almost infinitely more complicated. In dealing with English politics Cromwell was at least dealing with a people with whose habits of life and thought he was personally familiar. It is, indeed, hardly probable that he would have founded a permanent political system, even if, in the remainder of his career, he had had to address himself merely to the problem of finding a satisfactory government for Englishmen. In any case, however, it was an additional difficulty that he had to consider also the relations between England and the remainder of the British Isles, of whose ways of life he knew little, and the difficulty became still greater when he had to consider the relations between England and the continental states, of whose development and aspirations he knew even less.

In considering the action of Cromwell towards Ireland and Scotland, it will be well to begin by throwing aside the notion that he deliberately sinned against the light. There was, doubtless, ignorance of their past history on his part, and ignorance also of the weak-



ness of force when applied to the solution of political problems; but, on the other hand, it should not be forgotten that statesmen cannot of the very necessity of the case be content with allowing political problems to solve themselves by the action and reaction of natural forces. They have to devise or strengthen some kind of institutions which will afford a shelter to the existing generation for the time being, and give scope for the peaceable development of those forces by which the future is to be moulded.

As matters stood in Ireland when Cromwell disembarked at Dublin in 1649, it may fairly be urged that it passed the wit of man to imagine a settlement which would satisfy the just requirements of both nations. The root of the difficulty lay in the fact that at the time of the original conquest by Henry II. and John, the Irish, though superior to the Anglo-Norman race in art, were at a lower stage of civilisation as far as political institutions were concerned. On the one hand this inferiority made the conquest easy. On the other hand, it made the English nation contemptuous of the conquered tribes, and little disposed to support either good or strong government in Ireland. The first English king to deal firmly with the Irish problem was Henry VIII., who enriched the chiefs with the spoils of the monasteries, seeking thereby to bind them to his government, and gradually to introduce through them a higher political organisation into the country.



This action of Henry VIII. was by no means inspired by pure benevolence. Having broken with Rome, he was in danger of being assailed by continental Powers, and he was shrewd enough to be aware that Ireland, little formidable in herself, might be made the basis of an attack upon England if she fell into the hands of a foreign State. If his Tudor successors relinquished his policy, they had the excuse—at least with the exception of Mary—that the Reformation had developed in England into doctrinal change wholly unsuited to the minds of Irishmen at that time and repelled by them with the utmost vigour. Under these circumstances it was inevitable that the English Government should—in very self-defence—strive to make itself master of Ireland, the time being one in which difference of religion formed the dividing line between one people and another. To suppose that England would hesitate to use her strength to garrison Ireland against enterprises which would have helped Irishmen, but which would have been ruinous to Englishmen, is to imagine a submissiveness to an ideal philosophy of which Utopia itself is incapable.

The only question worth considering is whether there was any better way of maintaining England's grasp on Ireland than that which was actually found, and it must be acknowledged that no way capable of being embodied in practice has hitherto been suggested. In the days of the later Tudors there was no possibility of sending a sufficient military force to guard Ireland

against invasion, whilst at the same time fostering a spirit of goodwill by leaving the social and religious ideas of Irishmen unassailed. The English treasury was too empty to render possible the military effort, and the self-satisfaction of Englishmen with their own social and religious system too complete to allow them to be tolerant of other modes of life than their own. England, moreover, possessed a hardy and adventurous population, eager to acquire elsewhere the means of a more comfortable existence than was to be found at home, and contemptuous of the Irish race, which they regarded as little better than barbarous. The system of holding Ireland by English colonies was therefore adopted, and that system was attended with the horrible maltreatment of the natives of the country, guilty, in the eyes of the English settlers, of the inexpressible crime of regarding their country as their own and of doing their best to keep it for themselves.

In the days of James I. and Charles I. attempts were made, with considerable success, to improve the situation. James had received Ireland from his predecessor as a conquered country, and the two Stuart Kings aimed at basing their authority on law rather than upon violence. Nor was there wanting in them a certain benevolence towards Irishmen, though the form taken by that benevolence was to make Irishmen as like Englishmen as possible, without thought of helping them to develop on their own lines. Their one remedy for disorder was the introduction of English

settlers, and the great Ulster plantation was followed by others more imperfectly carried out. Law again, when Irishmen were concerned, was apt to dwindle into chicanery, and even when some consideration was shown to them, there was always in the background a resolution to mould them after English fashions as soon as England became strong enough to speak in more imperious tones. The overthrow of Strafford when the Long Parliament met only increased their irritation, because triumphant Puritanism was certain to take the offensive against their religion more violently than Strafford or any of his predecessors.

Whilst, therefore, in England public opinion ran strongly against Charles, public opinion in Ireland rallied to him as the least of two evils. The great Roman Catholic landowners, many of them descended from the Anglo-Norman colonists of the days of the Plantagenets, cried out for liberty of religion and a preponderating voice in the government of the country by the means of completion of Parliamentary institutions in Ireland. The mass of the Celtic population asked not only for liberty of religion, but also for the restoration of land taken from themselves and their fathers by English and Scottish settlers. The first class offered in 1641 to hold Dublin for Charles, and to send an Irish army to support him in England against the Parliament at Westminster. The second rose in insurrection in Ulster, driving off the settlers, and in some places committing wholesale murders amongst a defence-

less population. Before long the two elements of resistance to England had combined, and the greater part of Ireland was in full insurrection. In England the sad story was told with enormous exaggeration, and the exaggerations sunk into the popular mind all the more because in the course of the Civil War Charles frequently attempted to bring an Irish army over to England to assist him in maintaining his cause.

Looking back upon the welter of the Irish war, two points stand clearly out. First, England was driven by the sense of danger both present and future to reconquer Ireland; secondly, that unless the good, will of Irishmen could be ultimately secured, the conquest of Ireland would be a source of weakness to the conquerors, to say nothing of the injury it would inflict on the conquered. In judging Cromwell's relations with Ireland it is puerile to ask that he should have weighed the rights and wrongs of the past in a balance of minute justice scarcely attainable by a modern political philosopher. A statesman cannot be ever digging up by the roots the trees planted by time that he may fairly apportion the blame for past errors. He has to deal with the living present and to do his best, according to his lights, to render the lives of those amongst his fellow-creatures entrusted to his care somewhat the better and the happier. The errors of Cromwell in dealing with Ireland were rooted in his profound ignorance of Irish social history prior to 1641, and to his consequent entire misunderstanding of the true charac-

ter of the events of that fatal year. What he believed, in common with the mass of his countrymen, was that up to that date Englishmen and Irishmen had lived side by side in a spirit of contented happiness, to the mutual benefit of both races, and that then, without the slightest provocation, Irish Roman Catholics, at the instigation of their priests, had done their best to exterminate their English benefactors by a series of atrocious massacres. That, holding these opinions, Cromwell—Puritan Englishman as he was—should have been guilty of the slaughters of Drogheda and Wexford is matter for regret, not for surprise. What may be reckoned to his credit is the good faith with which he fulfilled his own personal obligations to the conquered and his abstention from calling in the aid of indiscriminate slaughter and famine, as in the old days of Elizabethan warfare.

Whatever else the Cromwellian settlement of Ireland may have been, it was not Cromwellian in its conception. In Ireland, as in England, his negative work—his beating down with a strong hand everything that barred the way to the supremacy of the English State—was all his own; the constructive policy which was to follow after was suggested by others. To hold Ireland by colonists had been the plan of the later Tudors, of James I., and of Strafford; and the sweeping confiscation of lands which made room for the new colony had been proclaimed and planned by the Long Parliament and accepted by Charles I. Cromwell's part in the matter was to follow where others had led

the way. Nor would it be easy—if only we could accept Cromwell's view of the situation—to find serious fault with the Cromwellian settlement. If the Irish had been led into a wicked and murderous rebellion by their priests and by their chiefs and nobles, it was fitting that the punishment should fall on the classes which had caused the mischief, and not upon the multitude which had been led astray. Hence the first step was to offer freedom of emigration to the military leaders who were willing to take with them their armed followers to serve in foreign armies. Then followed the confiscation of lands and the banishment to the wilds of Connaught of such proprietors as had taken part in the war. A new English proprietorship was to arise, whilst the Irish peasant and artisan were to be bred up in the ways of peace, and to be taught to appreciate the blessings of a religion purer than their own. Cromwell's imaginary conception of Ireland before 1641 was to be realised in the Ireland of no distant future.

It is needless to dwell upon the hopeless ignorance of the past and the present revealed in the policy here sketched out. It took no account of the attachment of Irishmen to the life, and above all to the religion, of their own race; and thus created a gulf between the alien owners of the soil and the indigenous workers which no subsequent effort has been able to bridge over. Though Ireland's evils were not created

by Cromwell's settlement, they were enormously increased by his drastic treatment.

Between England and Scotland no such deep-seated antagonism existed, yet the course of events had produced differences which threw obstacles in the way of too hasty an amalgamation. In Scotland the ruling forces were the nobility and the Presbyterian clergy, sometimes hostile to one another and sometimes acting together. In England the ruling forces had formerly been the King and the bishops, now they were a sectarian Parliament and a sectarian army. Yet the two countries were so closely connected by nature that they must be either warmly allied or the bitterest of foes, and, as the weaker nation, Scotland had in the old days of hostility turned for support to France, and had thereby become the most dangerous of enemies to England, an enemy who can open the door to a foreign invader. With the entrance of the Reformation a better feeling began to prevail, which the union of the crowns to some extent further strengthened.

When in 1640 a Scottish army occupied the northern counties of England, it marched forth primarily to redress the wrongs of its own country. The Presbyterian Church of Scotland and the great independent authority of her nobles had been attacked or threatened by Charles. It is true that there was a desire amongst the Covenanters to remedy the ill-treatment of their English brethren in religion, but there was a stronger motive in the conviction that if Charles were allowed to become



undisputed master of England he would soon be undisputed master of Scotland as well. The feelings that pervaded the Scottish army when it crossed the Tweed in 1640 had not lost their strength when it crossed that river again in 1643, and fought side by side with English soldiers at Marston Moor.

With the successful ending of the Civil War, the differences between the two nations were brought into prominence. Scots of all classes took alarm at the growth of a strong military power in England, which was likely to threaten their national independence far more effectually than Charles with his ill-compacted levies had been able to do. The Presbyterian clergy and all who revered them loathed the tolerant policy of the English army as an encouragement to Sectarianism, and thereby to spiritual anarchy.

The Presbyterian Church government, as opposed to the more widely diffused Calvinistic doctrine, owed its strong position in Scotland—like all successful institutions—to its success in a struggle against powers more active for evil than for good. The Presbyterian clergy had won their way by opposing, on the one hand, sovereigns hostile to the Reformation or indifferent to its progress, and, on the other hand, nobles brutal in their methods and eager to enlarge their own estates at the expense of the moral and spiritual development of the nation. As the King and nobility when united were too strong to be resisted, it was natural for the clergy to seek allies on one side or the other,



and natural, too, that they should close their ranks by the exercise of a severe discipline and by discountenancing the establishment of separate bodies of worshippers, which would weaken their powers of resistance to an actual or prospective oppressor. Apart from such considerations, however, it is well that a more tolerant generation should remember what Scotland owed to these intolerant men—a firm grasp on the paramountcy of morality and duty, and a no less firm hold upon the brotherliness of Christian life and its independence of all considerations of worldly rank and place. Robert Burns was not exactly a model Presbyterian, but he would hardly have given out the watchword ‘A man’s a man for a’ that’ if the blood of his Presbyterian ancestors had not been hot within him.

Fear of military aggression, together with fear of ecclesiastical disintegration, combined to exasperate the Scots against the English sectarian army. *Proximus ardet Ucalegon*. The flames which were raging against the old royalty and the nascent Presbyterian Church of England would soon attack the Scottish Church and Commonwealth. But for the constancy of Charles in defence of his religion, the summer of 1647 would hardly have passed away without a combined attack by the Royalists and Presbyterians of both countries on the victorious army which had stricken down the isolated English Royalists at Naseby.

The invasion of England by the Duke of Hamilton in 1648 was, however, not the work of united Scotland.

The party of the Kirk, headed by Argyle, kept aloof from it, holding the danger from Charles to be greater than the danger from the English army and the English sects. After Hamilton's army had been destroyed at Preston, Cromwell came to an understanding with Argyle and the party of the Kirk on the simple basis that neither country was to meddle with the internal affairs of the other.

Even if Charles I. had died from natural causes, his removal from the scene would probably have been followed by misunderstandings between the dominant parties in the two countries. The mode of his death widened the breach. Devout Presbyterians forgot his hostility to the Kirk and remembered his Scottish birth. No longer divided between their apprehensions of an attack on the Covenant by Charles and their apprehensions of an attack upon it by the English army, they threw all their weight into the scale of the monarchy, and Charles II. was proclaimed at Edinburgh as the lawful sovereign, not of Scotland alone, but of England and Ireland as well. The English Parliament and army could but take up the challenge, and after Charles II. had landed in Scotland and had been received at Edinburgh as King of the three nations, war was the inevitable result. The claim of Scotland to dispose of the Government of England was dashed to the ground by Cromwell at Dunbar and Worcester.

In Scotland, as in England and Ireland, Cromwell had been prompt with his emphatic negative. Scotland,

it was settled once for all, was not to determine the form of the government of England without the consent of Englishmen. To build up again harmonious relations between the countries was the work of time, and neither Cromwell nor the statesmen of the Commonwealth could put an end to the estrangement of hearts which had followed upon the late war. To hinder a fresh outbreak of war English troops had to be quartered in the country; and in 1653-54 Glencairn's rising showed that the necessity was not simulated. In England, indeed, it was vainly supposed that the hearts of the Scots would be drawn to the Commonwealth by effecting a Legislative Union between the nations, by improving the administration of the law, and more especially by weakening the oppressive powers of the great land-owners. Yet in 1653 the Government was driven to put an end to the meetings of the General Assembly, as they would have had to put an end to any other body of men which claimed to represent the Scottish nation on the political field. The English Government of Scotland, as long as it lasted, was a good example of the government which fails, in spite of its excellent intentions and excellent practice, simply because it pays no heed to the spirit of nationality.

In one important respect there is a striking similarity between the action of the Commonwealth in Scotland and its action in Ireland. The most prominent of the causes leading to the military occupation of both countries was the alarm which prevailed in England lest

they should throw their swords into the balance of English parties. There is, therefore, at least one point of view from which the invasion of Ireland can be regarded as a measure of self-defence, and after Preston and Worcester the same might, without fear of contradiction, be said of Scotland. Yet here the resemblance ceases. The religious contrast between English and Irish was, at that age, far too wide to be bridged over even by an agreement to differ, whilst the confiscation of lands carried the hostility between the races into the field of material antagonism. Thus it came about that England as a whole, without distinction of party, was opposed to the Irish claims. The English settlers in Ireland were therefore not indissolubly wedded to the Commonwealth. Whether England were a republic or a monarchy mattered little to them, and a restoration would meet with no resistance if, as there was every reason to suppose, England under any form of government would support their claims. As far, therefore, as the Irish race was concerned, it was doomed to hopeless subjection to an alien conqueror, whatever might be the chances of the English political warfare.

With Scotland it was otherwise. Of the two influential classes, the nobles and the clergy, the nobles had already ranged themselves on the side of the monarchy, and though the more ardent of the clergy had been repelled by the irreligious and hypocritical behaviour of Charles II., few of their body could be brought to look with favour upon the intrusive Govern-

ment. That Government they abhorred not merely because it was anti-national, but because it was military and sectarian. A Restoration Government was not likely to be military even in England; and it was certain not to be sectarian. Nor would it have any reason to impose an armed garrison on Scotland. The Scottish people, therefore, had everything to gain by a restoration, and were certain to oppose themselves to any Government which stood in its way. Nor could the English Government fall back upon any body of settlers which, like those in Ireland, would at least uphold it as long as its strength was beyond dispute. For the present, indeed, it showed no signs of weakness. It was perfectly secure against another armed struggle in Ireland, and, after the suppression of Glencairn's rising, against another insurrection in Scotland. The danger of suppressing national feeling is, however, not confined to the danger of open revolt. To guard against that danger costs money. 'Give me a good policy,' said Baron Louis, 'and I will give you good finances.' Both Ireland and Scotland were poor countries, and the burden of holding them down fell mainly on the English Treasury. Dislike of the preponderance of the army, already great in England, would increase rapidly when it was found to imply the maintenance of heavy taxation rendered inevitable by the necessity of holding down Scotland and Ireland as well as England herself.

## LECTURE IV

CROMWELL AND THE PARLIAMENTS OF THE  
COMMONWEALTH

AFTER the 'crowning mercy' of Worcester, Cromwell, hoping that the Commonwealth would settle down under a regular form of government, urged Parliament to consent to an early dissolution followed by fresh elections held under an enlarged franchise and a more equal distribution of seats. Parliament, however, rejected any date for its dissolution earlier than after the expiry of three years, though there seems to have been a tacit understanding between Cromwell and its leaders that it should apply itself to practical legislation for the redress of grievances, thereby strengthening the claim of the Commonwealth to popular support.

Amongst the proposed reforms the first to demand immediate consideration was an Act of Amnesty, which indeed was passed in due form. Yet it was impossible by any such Act to satisfy more than very partially the material interests which had been enlisted against the Revolution. In the main, the war on the Parliamentary side had been financed by confiscation, and even if

Parliament had desired to make restoration, it had not the credit which would have enabled it to raise a loan sufficient for the purpose. Emptiness of pocket as well as sentiment confirmed the Cavalier gentry in their persistent royalism.

Other reforms seemed more likely to prosper. Cromwell was anxious for law reform, in order to cut short the long delays and the heavy expenses of the courts. A commission was appointed to recommend measures of reform, consisting of lawyers of repute like Matthew Hale, quick-witted men of the world like Anthony Ashley Cooper, soldiers like Desborough, and keen clerical reformers like Hugh Peters. The principal measures suggested by this commission now form part of our law. Yet they were so much beyond the time at which they were brought forward that some of them have only been accepted in the present century. On ecclesiastical reform, too, there was vigorous discussion. It had been laid down in *The Agreement of the People*, as presented by the officers in January 1649, that there should be an established Church with freedom of worship to such congregations as were unwilling to be included in it. In this respect, indeed, *The Agreement of the People* did but work on the lines of *The Heads of the Proposals*, though the established Church suggested in 1649 would no longer be episcopalian, as suggested in 1647. A body of ministers now proposed that the established Church should be constituted in an unprecedented way. The State was to appoint bodies of



commissioners to expel from the public ministry men unfit to teach, and to give certificates of competency to candidates presented to benefices in the usual way. Within certain limits no questions would be asked as to the religious party to which the candidate belonged. He might be a Presbyterian, an Independent, or a Baptist, though care would be taken that he was distinctly a Puritan. This scheme, which was ultimately put in force by Cromwell when he assumed the Protectorate, has constantly been attributed to him. There can be little doubt that it was in reality the work of John Owen; and that in this, as in so many other matters, Cromwell, who got the thing done, has received all the credit or discredit of the act, whilst its real originator has been forgotten.

Up to the summer of 1652 the law reform and Church reform schemes were both making good progress. Then there was a sudden check, Parliament virtually declining to have anything more to do with them. The Commonwealth, in fact, had embarked on an enterprising foreign policy which had landed it in a war, and war, as usual, proved incompatible with domestic reform.

The foreign policy of the Stuarts had been mainly dynastic, influenced to a great extent, though not entirely, by family considerations. The Commonwealth had no kinsman to support on an endangered throne, when the interests of the country counselled abstention. Yet, in spite of this advantage, just at the time when the



Commonwealth came into existence there were enough difficulties in the way of the selection of a prudent foreign policy to try the wisest head.

Up to the Treaties of Westphalia, Europe had been divided for the most part on religious lines, though secular aspects had, as is always the case, contributed largely to widen the breach. With the Treaties of Westphalia the chief origin of religious quarrel was removed, the principle of *Cujus regio ejus religio* being admitted not only into public law, but, what was of more importance, into public sentiment. There might still be local oppression of religion, but the important thing was that it was merely local. There was no banding together of Catholic States against Protestant States as such : no banding together of Protestant States against Catholic States as such. Thenceforth wars of trade, wars for the planting, acquisition, and maintenance of colonies, would take the place of wars of religion. Any English party which failed to recognise this might be noble and heroic ; it would not succeed, because it would have against it the spirit of the age—in other words, the spirit evolved out of a reaction against the evils arising from wars of religion.

Under these circumstances the foreign policy of the Commonwealth indicates more than appears on the surface. Men who had risen to power as Puritans, and who regarded the defence of religion as their chief title to political authority, allowed themselves to fall almost if not quite entirely under mundane influences when

they spoke to foreign States in the name of England. In so doing they were giving unawares the signal for the revival of that material spirit which, far more than the revival of the monarchy, was of the essence of the Restoration; from the very Puritans themselves came the first check to triumphant Puritanism. Thereby Parliament was brought into collision with Cromwell and the army, in which the Puritan ideal was still warmly cherished.

Difficult as was the choice of a foreign policy in reality, in appearance it seemed easier to steer a safe course than in the days of preceding governments. There was nothing to fear either from France or Spain, because as long as those two countries were at war with one another they would both endure serious provocation before going to war with a new enemy. The continental situation therefore, especially as France was internally weakened by the civil wars of the Fronde, relieved England from the danger of being attacked by any strong European Power, thus giving her an impunity which, however pleasant it might seem at the time, was necessarily accompanied by a strong temptation to that overbearing and irritating policy which rarely fails to bring disaster in its train. Add to this that it was just at this moment that England was, for the time, able to dispose of a victorious army in addition to a well equipped and considerable fleet.

Proud of its strength and incapable of entering into the feelings of other nations, the Government of the

Commonwealth haughtily demanded of the Dutch Republic no less than the actual amalgamation of the two nations; and then, angry at the repulse which naturally followed, passed the Navigation Act to strike down the carrying trade of the Dutch. Taken alone, the Navigation Act would probably not have led to war, but it created a temper on both sides which rendered war probable if any further provocation were given. That provocation was not long delayed. In 1649 English vessels had been seized in the Mediterranean by the French, and the English Government had thereupon authorised the fitting out of privateers to make reprisals. A state of unavowed but very real maritime war had thus come to prevail between France and England. Orders were accordingly issued by the Government that Dutch ships should be brought in as prizes if they had on board French goods, and though the ships themselves were ultimately released the goods were retained. Of this interruption to their commerce the Dutch bitterly complained, it being doubtful whether, as long as there was no formal war with France, England was entitled to the usual rights of a belligerent. Moreover, the Dutch had made themselves the champions of a liberal amendment of the law of the sea, and in a recent treaty with Spain had obtained the insertion of an article vindicating the principle that the flag should cover the goods.

The war which broke out in 1652 was, however, immediately brought about by a more exciting cause.

England, from the days of the Plantagenets, had claimed the sovereignty of what she was pleased to call the British seas, and had compelled the shipping of other nations to acknowledge her supremacy by dipping flag and sail in the presence of an English man-of-war. Tromp, the great Dutch Admiral, refused or hesitated to make this acknowledgment to a fleet commanded by Blake, and war was the result—a war in which, after battle upon battle had been fought, England on the whole gained the upper hand, not because her seamen were braver or her commanders more skilful, but because her naval administration was better organised and her ships more efficient.

The Dutch war was not the war of Cromwell and the army, though Cromwell consented to it under the impression that Tromp had deliberately insulted the English flag. From the time of its outbreak he associated himself with those who strove for peace. If there was to be war, he desired that it should be waged not against a Protestant country, but on behalf of Protestants against a Roman Catholic country. He wanted to carry his Puritanism into foreign politics.

After the bitter hostility of the Puritan party to Spain in the reigns of James and Charles, it appears inexplicable at first sight that the more advanced Puritans should have grown friendly to Spain and hostile to France. This was owing, in the first place, to the countenance which the French Government had shown to Charles in the course of the Civil War, and to its

efforts to effect his restoration to power by an understanding with the Presbyterians. Later on other causes supervened. The explanation is, after all, not far to seek. It is said that when, in the present century, Marshal Narvaez was on his death bed his confessor urged him, as in duty bound, to forgive his enemies. 'Enemies,' answered the dying man, 'I have none.' 'No,' he continued, when the priest had expressed astonishment, 'I have shot them all.' Even so Spain, in the middle of the seventeenth century, had no Protestants to persecute. She had burnt them all.

It was otherwise with France. There was still a considerable Huguenot population within her borders, and her Government had been pledged by the Edict of Nantes to tolerate them under fixed conditions. The Government, however, was weak and distracted, whilst social and ecclesiastical pressure was put upon the Protestants, who had many sufferings to recount. When, in 1651, Condé raised the standard of insurrection in Guienne, Cromwell, though unwilling to advise immediate interference, was desirous of acquiring information with a view to intervention if Condé's movements should turn out to be to the advantage of the Protestants. To ally England with Condé would necessarily be to ally her with Condé's patron—Spain.

It is easy to see now that an attack upon France with the object of securing an independent position for the Huguenots under English protection would have been a fatal policy. Even in the improbable event of

immediate success, England would have been called to make sacrifices far beyond her power to maintain the abnormal situation she would have created. She would have had against her the strongly developed national spirit of the French nation, and the decision of other European States to accept the principle of *Cujus regio ejus religio* as the sole means of putting an end to religious warfare. Though Cromwell did not grasp all this, he appears to have felt instinctively that to make war against France on behalf of the Protestants was to court disaster, and though he was many times brought near to the initiation of this hopeless policy he always drew back before the mischief was done. His instinctive sense of the line which separates the practicable from the impracticable saved him where his reason found no solution.

If, however, there was to be no wild adventure on behalf of the French Protestants—many of whom would have been the first to disclaim English aid—was it necessary that England should take sides at all in the war between the two continental monarchies? Might it not have been better for her, better even for the establishment of the Commonwealth, if she had preserved her neutrality, pushing on the advancement of trade and acquiring maritime supremacy in defence of trade? This appears to have been the line taken by the majority in Parliament which brought about the Dutch War. It was not Cromwell's view. He was a soldier before he was a statesman—a soldier and not a sailor. The idea rooted itself gradually in his mind that England had

most to gain in allying herself with France. Such an alliance would make it impossible for the French Government to permit persecution of Protestants in the King's dominions, whilst England would have much to gain by the seizure of Spanish colonies and Spanish treasure-fleets. As yet English statesmen had not come to look on their country as mainly a maritime power, and therefore concerned to avoid the risk involved in holding continental possessions. In Cromwell's plans the army must play a conspicuous part, and a fortified post on the continental side of the Straits of Dover must be occupied, as an assurance that if an English alliance enabled either France or Spain to gain the upper hand, the victory of either should not lead to such predominance as to be dangerous to England. In the early part of 1652 Cromwell negotiated with Mazarin for the possession of Dunkirk. Later on he negotiated with Spain for the possession of Calais. The occupation of either would strengthen the hold of England upon the Straits; but it would also enable an English army to fall on the back of the French if they pushed on too far eastwards of Dunkirk, as upon the back of the Spaniards if they pushed on too far southwards of Calais. For the time the negotiation with France ended in nothing. Mazarin was naturally unwilling to loose his hold on Dunkirk till his chance of defending it against the Spanish assailants grew desperate, whilst the Independent majority in Parliament was friendly to Spain, and after they had plunged into war with the



United Provinces, all other warlike complications were out of the question.

During the time which elapsed between the beginning of the Dutch war in May 1652 and the breaking up of the Parliament in April 1653, Cromwell's relations with his old allies, the Independent leaders, was somewhat peculiar. He did not go into opposition, condemning the war altogether like Fox and the Whigs at the end of the eighteenth century. He did his best to enable England to get the upper hand now that hostilities had actually broken out, but he seized every opportunity of forwarding the cause of peace. At one time it seemed as if his object had been secured. In November 1652 a new Council of State was elected, and the result showed a majority on the side of the party of peace. Yet it profited him little. A Council of State did not, like a modern Cabinet, depend for its existence on the constant attendance and unremitting efforts of its supporters. The majority which had voted at the election immediately dispersed, preferring an easy life to wearisome attendance on the debates, whilst the war party, which was in the minority when the House was full, stuck to work and became a majority when the House was empty. Even if questions of domestic policy had provided no causes of estrangement between Cromwell and his old allies, this difference of opinion on foreign policy would have riven them asunder.

Parliament and army, however, were by this time



divided on other questions than those arising out of foreign politics. The army, discontented with the Dutch war, was also discontented with the stoppage of domestic reforms. In August 1652 it presented a petition urging Parliament to proceed quickly with a measure for the establishment of a reformed electoral system to be followed by a speedy dissolution. Thus driven forward, Parliament addressed itself once more to a Bill on elections. Yet the more the members considered the question the more hostile they became to any very sweeping reform. Many of them, no doubt, were actuated by the lowest motives. These men had dipped their hands too deeply in public plunder, and had been too accessible to corruption to be otherwise than most unwilling to retire into private life. Others again, to whom the welfare of the nation was the first thought, feared, not unreasonably, that new elections would produce a Parliament which would muzzle Puritanism and perhaps even recall the King. Overmuch blame has indeed been thrown upon men who, like Vane and Bradshaw, failed to solve a problem before which their successful opponents were equally to fail. How was the nation to govern itself by means or representative Parliaments, and yet the right Puritan ideal be maintained as the basis of government? If the latter alternative was to be defended at all risks, only two ways could be conceived as possible: the method of force, and the method of intrigue. The military leaders natu-

rally preferred force. The Parliamentary leaders, no less naturally, preferred intrigue.

Gradually the scheme of the Parliamentary majority grew in clearness. In the first place the idea of a general election was discarded. Vacant seats were alone to be filled with new members, whilst the old members were to continue sitting without the necessity of presenting themselves for re-election. Nor was this all. There were to be certain qualifications by which Royalists would be excluded from occupying seats in the new Parliament, and—though we have not accurate information on the point—there seems little doubt that it was intended that the sitting members should act as an election committee to exclude from the House those who fell under the ban of these qualifications, thereby becoming the arbiters of the future Parliament, admitting and excluding without being compelled to render an account to anyone.

For some months Cromwell strove to the utmost to bring Parliament and army to an understanding. It was like him to oppose himself to Parliamentary intrigue; it was also like him to struggle as long as possible against the employment of force. He saw the evils of the first course more clearly than Vane, and the evils of the second course more clearly than Harrison or Lambert. As usual, the negative result branded itself on his mind. Constructive statesmanship was lacking to him, and indeed it may be doubted whether, as the situation then lay, it was in any man's power to

erect a permanent constitutional edifice in England. He ultimately rallied to the idea of entrusting the Government temporarily to a committee composed of the Parliamentary and military leaders. His proposal, however, failed to commend itself to those who had no wish to substitute a close oligarchy for Parliamentary government; and on April 20, 1653, Cromwell, irritated by what he conceived to be a breach of faith on the part of Vane and his adherents, called soldiers into the House, cleared out the members, and locked the doors.

A deed of violence had placed the Government at last in the hands of Cromwell and the army. The Long Parliament, in the last months of its existence, had been so thoroughly unpopular that, if a general election by reformed constituencies had now been ordered, there was at least a chance that a majority favourable to the ideas of the army might have been obtained. It was, however, no more than a chance, and the very men who had been crying out for a general election as opposed to a mere filling of vacant seats turned round and declared that, for the present at least, no general election could be allowed. The possession of power had brought with it responsibility, and the officers who had assailed Vane and Bradshaw now began to participate in their fears. The desire for parliamentary government died away. The desire to have the right thing done gained the ascendancy. After all, it must be remembered that the ship of State was passing through

troubled waters. The basis of political thought in the sixteenth century was the supremacy of the King. The basis of political thought in the nineteenth century is the supremacy of Parliament. In the old days the King could do no wrong, in the sense that his command legally signified was unalterable except by himself. In our own time Parliament, in the same sense, can do no wrong. In the middle of the seventeenth century the one basis had been broken up, but it was not yet superseded by the other. There was, therefore, nothing unalterable, nothing to which men were bound to submit even when obedience ran counter to their most cherished moralities. The King had been executed because he would not do what seemed right in the eyes of the most powerful section of his subjects, and, for much the same reason, Parliament had been broken up. It was a daring undertaking to base government neither on traditionary respect to royalty nor on popular will, but simply on right judgment. Who was to decide which judgment was the right one? The army, at all events, could throw its sword into the balance and silence all who presumed to differ from it; but what if the army itself were divided, and if parties were formed in it struggling for the mastery? And this was precisely what happened. A party headed by Lambert demanded civil and ecclesiastical reforms to be carried out by a council chosen for the purpose, without too sweeping a breach of established custom, whilst another party, headed by Harrison, asked for a

larger body, composed of religious enthusiasts, to introduce the Fifth Monarchy and the reign of the Saints, as well as to get rid of all institutions in Church and State which checked the complete renovation of England according to the ideas which commended themselves to the most advanced Puritan.

The dominant ideas of Lambert and Harrison are easily distinguishable, but Cromwell's shifted—if not from day to day, at least from month to month. His predominance in the council of the army was not, like that of Napoleon over the men of his time, the mastery of a clear intellect promptly decisive in the choice of means as well as in the pursuit of ends. It was the influence of a mind keen to perceive the risks incurred on either side, yet hesitating to employ acute remedies until actual danger stared him in the face and drove him to the use of strong measures at the moment when his own impulse was in accordance with the common feeling. For some weeks after his forcible intervention at Westminster Cromwell was hostile, not merely to the Long Parliament, but to Parliaments in general, whilst religious enthusiasm, rousing within him the thought that he was an instrument of God, threw him on Harrison's side rather than on Lambert's. Yet his influence, on the whole, was that of a moderator. The new assembly was to be nominated, not elected, and the names of its members, in the first place given in by the Independent and Baptist Churches throughout the country, were subjected to a winnowing process in the

Council of Officers, by which also some names were added which had no place in any of the lists received from the country. An attempt was even made to give a seat to Fairfax, which only failed in consequence of his own refusal.

The assembly thus chosen claimed the title of Parliament. This nominated Parliament—the Barebones Parliament, as the Cavaliers afterwards called it in derision—was by no means predominantly the fanatical horde which it appeared to be in the eyes of later generations. Neither the Independent and Baptist Churches who began the selection of its members, nor the officers who completed it, were Fifth Monarchy men after Harrison's model. The new Parliament—to give it the name it assumed—was divided into two parties, one, indeed, advocating the most drastic mode of dealing with existing institutions in the hope of finding ideal substitutes to replace them, the other demanding such moderate reforms as would correct without destroying the laws which had been handed down from earlier generations. Contrary to the general opinion which has since prevailed, the moderates were in a clear majority. Once more, however, as in the Long Parliament, the moderates lost power by neglect of business. They could attend in their places to vote at the election of a Council of State; they could not bring themselves to undergo the daily round of duty, to listen to dull speeches and forego the calls of business or pleasure. In those days there were no Parliamentary Whips,

and it was the moderate party that suffered most in consequence.

The two main questions under discussion related to Law and Tithes. By a majority of the members present, the House decided on preparing a completely new frame of law intended to give prompt justice to everybody for a few shillings, and to abolish the Court of Chancery. As to tithe, the one party was content to substitute for it some other kind of maintenance for the clergy which should be less burdensome to those who paid. The other party sought to abolish patronage as well as all enforced support of ministers, leaving them entirely to the voluntary contributions of their flocks. A committee, before which the question had been thrashed out, reported in favour of the retention of tithes and of a general ecclesiastical settlement on the lines indicated by the proposals of Owen and his colleagues in 1652. By the moderate party, backed by public opinion outside, this proposal was welcomed as maintaining the provision of a settled income for the ministers, and as fending off the attack on patronage, which, taken in connection with the proposal to establish a new legal system, was held to imply an assault on property at large. Yet when the vote was taken the moderates did not appear in sufficient numbers to defeat the opposition, and the first clause of the scheme, as it came from the committee, was defeated, though only by a majority of two. At the next sitting the members



who had supported, as they held, religion and property, hurried down early to the House, and before their opponents could arrive went off to Cromwell and delivered into his hands the supreme power of which in a strange way they had received the deposit. Soldiers arrived in time to prevent any effort of the advanced party to constitute a House. Cromwell, it seems, had not directly taken part in these proceedings, but he accepted their result, and had, no doubt, a general knowledge of what was going on. During the last months of 1653 he had passed over from the party of Harrison to that of Lambert. The disruption of the nominated Parliament was not indeed the final overthrow of political Puritanism, but it frustrated an attempt to make the spirit of extreme Puritanism dominant without regard to the social institutions of the country. There would still be unwillingness in Cromwell himself and in those—whether soldiers or civilians—by whom he was surrounded to admit the claims of Parliament to entire supremacy; but a desire to work in harmony with elected Parliaments was again paramount, and should efforts in that direction prove futile, it was likely that any government, however absolute, would attempt to keep in touch with the desires and even the prejudices of the mass of the nation.

Regarded from this point of view, the nominated Parliament appears as the high-water mark of Puritanism. The Long Parliament had been broken up because it was not Puritan enough—that is to say, had



not been sufficiently aggressive in the reform of grievances in Church and State. The nominated Parliament was broken up because it was too aggressive. The mundane spirit was gaining the upper hand when its doors were closed, and of this mundane spirit, which was in effect the spirit of the Restoration, Cromwell was ready to be the mouthpiece. His work of striking down the opponents of Puritanism had for the most part come to an end. His work of striking down those who exaggerated Puritanism was now beginning.

## LECTURE V

## THE PROTECTORATE

THE instrument of Government, which was the constitution of the Protectorate, was not Cromwell's work, though he consented to act under its provisions. Taken broadly, it may be regarded as a cross between the Elizabethan system and *The Agreement of the People*. From the former it borrowed the 'single person' supported by a council in the exercise of administrative powers, though the position assigned to the council was more independent under the Protectorate than it had been under the monarchy. Elizabeth could set aside the recommendations of her council at her pleasure. Oliver was bound to do nothing without the consent of his. No doubt his power of influence over its members was considerable, but in his dealing with them he had to rely on influence, not on authority. Though, unfortunately, we have little knowledge of anything that took place in the council beyond mere official routine, we know enough to convince us that the ordinary belief that Oliver was an autocrat and his councillors mere puppets is a very incorrect view of the situation.

The Instrument also established occasional Parliaments like those under Elizabeth, with legislative powers and the sole right of voting extraordinary taxation, the fixed sum assigned to the Government by the Instrument being roughly equivalent in principle to the ancient revenue of the monarchy. In legislation, Parliament would, however, be freed from the necessity of obtaining the assent of the Crown, as, though the Protector might state his objections, those objections might be set aside by Parliament and the law passed without his consent after the interval of a fortnight. On the other hand, in accordance with *The Agreement of the People*, he was prohibited from altering anything contained in the Instrument. Also in accordance with the Agreement the members were elected by reformed constituencies, and the predominance of the country gentlemen, mostly Cavaliers or Presbyterians, over the small boroughs was thus got rid of. Special securities for religious liberty also found a place in the Instrument.

Taken all in all, the new constitution marks a reaction against extreme Puritanism as manifested in the nominated Parliament. In its attitude towards Parliamentarism it aims at a compromise. It gives unusual powers to Parliaments in one direction, only to hem them in on the other. It enables Parliament to legislate at pleasure on most subjects, but forbids it to legislate on others, and those the most important. What the residue of the Long Parliament had attempted to do by perpetuating their own seats and by claiming to sit in

judgment over disputed elections, the framers of the Instrument did by interposing a written constitution between future Parliaments and themselves—a constitution which they hoped to render permanent by requiring its acceptance by electors and elected whenever members were chosen. Once more, the two ideas of the Revolution—the idea that the nation ought to decide its own laws, and that right laws only ought to be enforced—were in collision with one another.

What chance was there of such a settlement proving permanent? Once give a large constitutional place to a representative Parliament, and Parliament, merely because it is representative, will in the long run gain possession of supreme power. The greater immediate weakness of the Instrument lay in its being the work of soldiers, a work which soldiers felt themselves bound in duty to maintain. Not a single civilian had been consulted on its formation, and the army had thus made itself the depository of the principle that it was the business of right-thinking men to save the nation from its own foolishness. It was precisely the course most calculated to raise opposition amongst a people ready to submit to much from old established authorities, but prompt to take offence when called upon to submit to the clanking of the sword.

Oliver, no doubt, might be trusted to do his best to disguise the predominance of the soldiery and to place the civilian government in the foreground; but whenever a crisis came—and as matters stood it would be

exceedingly difficult to avert a crisis—the soldiers would be called to the front, and appear, what they were in reality, the arbiters of the political world. Nor was it only as the virtual disposer of power that the army was distasteful to the nation. Even in peace it was the cause of what in those days passed as enormous expense, and of increased taxation, originally imposed for the purposes of redressing national grievances, but now maintained to prevent the nation from settling its affairs in its own way. Yet it was most unlikely that the Protectorate would give to England a period of peace. Oliver, himself a soldier, had come to think that political knots were easier cut than untied, and, even if he had been remiss in this he was pushed on by the army. Cynical observers might say that war was necessary because Lambert wanted a sole command to qualify him for succession to the Protectorate. However this may have been, it is enough that military men are naturally inclined to seek violent solutions of difficult problems, and that the military men of the Commonwealth and Protectorate had been so successful in gaining scope for their ideas at home that they might easily fall into the mistake of expecting to be equally successful abroad. English writers have been prompt to recognise that the rise of a successful General to power in France was the prelude to the Napoleonic wars. They have hardly realised that, except for four months, from April to August 1654, the whole of the Protectorate was a time either of open war or of active

preparation for war, and that even during those months the Protector was hesitating, not whether he should keep the peace or not, but merely what enemy he should attack. There may be differences of opinion as to whether Oliver's wars were just or unjust, profitable or unprofitable. There can be no difference of opinion on the unpopularity which the additional expense they involved entailed on the Government.

That Oliver should seek peace with the Dutch was a matter of course. He had all along disliked making war on a Protestant State, and when, whilst the nominated Parliament was still sitting, he took the negotiation in hand, he was able to get rid of the main stumbling-block—the resolution of the leading men to insist on an amalgamation of the two republics. When peace was at last signed in April 1654, though Oliver abandoned many of his claims, he insisted on an engagement by the province of Holland to exclude the young Prince of Orange from all active participation in public affairs, an exclusion which, by exasperating the other six provinces, made any close alliance with the republic impossible. Equally impossible was the fulfilment of Oliver's dream of a great alliance in which all the Protestant powers of Europe should take part under the leadership of England. The very proposition ignored the effect of the Treaties of Westphalia in putting an end to the classification of European States in accordance with their religious differences.

Translated into more worldly terms, an alliance of

Protestant States might perhaps have been made the basis of a policy of peace. It was possible to leave France and Spain—if they would have it so—to weaken themselves by their efforts at mutual destruction, whilst England, throwing her strength into the maintenance of her commerce, gathered friends who would join her in resistance to the conqueror should he emerge from the struggle strong enough to embark on a career of aggression. If such a policy occasionally commended itself to Oliver's mind, it was only to be rejected. Partly, perhaps, at the instigation of the officers who surrounded him, but certainly at the instigation of his own brain, he had come to look on war as the natural means for carrying out great designs.

On the whole, with frequent intervals, Oliver's aim had been a war with Spain. It had been in his mind when, in the last month of 1651 and the early months of 1652, he favoured a compact with France for the cession of Dunkirk. It had again been in his mind when in 1653 he attempted to draw the Dutch into a common enterprise for the conquest of Spanish America; and yet again when, in August 1654, he won the approval of his council to the expedition of Penn and Venables, the concealed object of which was conquest in the West Indies. That he did not make up his mind earlier was no doubt to some extent owing to the difficulty of obtaining the assent of a council in which the majority was bent upon making war against France, but was also to a great extent owing to his

suspensions of the designs of the French Government. On two points he needed to be satisfied—that the Huguenots would be secured from oppression, and that his own position in England would not be shaken by French support given to a Stuart Restoration as soon as Mazarin's internal and external difficulties had been surmounted.

So far did Oliver's distrust go that in May 1654 he all but concluded a treaty with Spain which would have bound him to join her in making war upon France if only she would agree to pay a considerable part of the expenses. A month sufficed to show how little Spain could be relied on. Only with the greatest efforts could she find money—and that all too little—for her own armaments. The necessary result of her impoverishment was military failure, and on August 18 news reached London that Turenne had broken up the Spanish investment of Arras. On that very day Penn and Venables received instructions to prepare their attack on the West Indies. There had been vacillation enough, but at length the decision was beyond recall.

It is worth while to consider what that decision actually was, and under what circumstances it was reached. For some time Oliver had been negotiating both with France and Spain with the view of taking part in the continental war. He had urged France to join him in besieging Dunkirk, and he had urged Spain to join him in besieging Calais. Both these proposals were now temporarily dropped. England was not to join Spain



against France, but neither was she to join France against Spain. The war was to be one in the West Indies alone—not a European war at all. The negotiation with the French ambassador was now confined to an effort to restore commercial peace, and when Parliament met on September 3 even that had not been accomplished. In dealing with either State, Oliver had comforted himself with thinking that Protestantism would in some way or another be benefited. In dealing with Spain he had projected an invasion of Guienne, with the object of succouring the French Protestants. In dealing with France he had projected a war which would weaken the power of the one State which fostered the Inquisition, and would give protection to those very Protestants. He was now no longer in a position to claim from France security for the Huguenots, and he had therefore to make the most of his defiance of the Inquisition. When he prepared to make war on Spain, he premised it by demanding of Cardenas, the Spanish ambassador, not merely liberty of trade in the Indies, but also the fullest liberty of private worship for Englishmen in the Spanish dominions. Cardenas bluntly rejected both requisitions. ‘It is,’ he replied, ‘to ask my master’s two eyes.’

However much Oliver might flatter himself that he had made religion one of the corner-stones of the war, it is doubtful whether a single Protestant would be the better for his protest against the Inquisition. The war he projected was a war for material gains—a war,

indeed, which opened out the path of empire for England, but which, conducted, as it was, after the fashion of an ambuscade, without notice given that hostilities were decided on, failed to commend itself to the conscience of England or the world. It was all the worse because Oliver had real grievances of which to complain. English ships had been seized, English colonists massacred, not because the one had traded with Spanish settlements or the other had planted themselves in islands occupied by Spain, but simply because they claimed the right to live and trade where no Spanish inhabitant was to be found. If Oliver had clearly put forward his complaints at Madrid, and, after insisting on an acknowledgment limiting the Spanish dominion to territory occupied by Spaniards, had declared war upon receiving a negative answer, no one could have reasonably blamed him. What he did was to avoid making any positive demand accompanied by a threat of war, whilst he prepared a secret expedition to snap up Spanish colonies without any preliminary declaration of war and without any hint that he intended to break the peace. All that can be said on his behalf is that he had immersed himself in the tales of Elizabethan adventure, and that he seems to have fancied it possible to go to war in the West Indies on the well-known principle of 'No peace beyond the Line,' whilst he abstained from hostilities in Europe.

In any case, the Spanish adventure was a turning-point in Oliver's career. Puritanism still had a hold

on his heart, but for all that it was the material—the mundane—aspect of politics which had gained the upper hand, at least as far as foreign affairs were concerned. Oliver might imagine that hatred of the Inquisition led him on. In reality he was acting no otherwise than the worldly politician would have acted in his place.

When Parliament met on September 3, the day of Dunbar and Worcester, the Protector was able to submit to it a good record as far as his domestic policy was concerned. As empowered by the Instrument, he had issued ordinances on many points of current interest, and on some points of permanent interest which would hold good unless Parliament decided to revoke them. In the matter of the reform of Chancery, his ordinance provided for the redress of grievances without endangering the existence of a court which undoubtedly supplied a need felt in consequence of the lack of flexibility in the existing common law system. The judges entrusted with the administration of Chancery law were consulted on the subject in 1655, and unanimously condemned certain portions of the ordinance—Lenthall, the Master of the Rolls, characteristically objecting that they were calculated to diminish his income, his colleagues finding fault with them on more professional grounds. It is not a point on which a layman is qualified to offer an opinion ; but it is much to be desired that some lawyer familiar with Chancery practice would give us the benefit of his judgment. The other great ordinance was that relating

to the Church, in which the system of Owen and his colleagues was established with some changes in detail.

However satisfactory this quasi-legislation may have been, it was not to be expected that Parliament would content itself with registering the ordinances of the Protector. It began by questioning the right of a few officers to impose a permanent constitution on the country, and claimed to be itself supreme and qualified to act as a constituent assembly. To this Oliver demurred, avoiding all discussion on the constitutional claim of the Instrument to obedience, but, taking his stand on the fact that, as required by the Instrument, every member of the House had signed a pledge not to alter the Government as it was settled in a single person and a Parliament. Oliver now directed that no member should sit in the House who did not repeat the promise he had already given at his election. The most fiery refused to submit, and were excluded from the House, whilst those who remained, holding that though they were bound by their engagement not to alter the Government by a single person and a Parliament, they were not bound to refrain from altering the relations between the two, proceeded to draw up a new constitution in the form of a Bill. This new constitution differed from the old one mainly in two points. It greatly restricted the toleration accorded by the Instrument, and it further required that the council should remain in office only till the meeting

of the next Parliament, when its members should present themselves to the House for re-election. In this way the question of parliamentary control over the executive was once more thrust into the foreground. Was authority to be subject to the will of the representatives of the nation, or was there to be some carefully defined arrangement to prevent that will from being too exclusively prominent? Oliver cut the knot by dissolving Parliament.

So far the story has been told in all histories. Yet the constitutional question had a practical side, of which but little has been said. The state of the finances was such as to give an object lesson on the truth that a military government is expensive. In 1635 the revenue of Charles I. had been estimated at 618,000*l*. In 1654 the revenue stood at 2,250,000*l*. The whole estimate of the expenditure, supposing the army had numbered no more than the 30,000 men provided for by the Instrument, would have stood at 1,914,000*l*,<sup>1</sup> thus showing a surplus of 336,000*l*. As a matter of fact, however, the army had swollen to 57,000, and the expenditure was estimated at 2,670,000*l*, thus showing a deficit of 420,000*l*, which would probably in practice work out at a higher figure. It was not altogether Oliver's personal fault that the military expenditure had risen to such a height. Though he had accepted he had not originated the scheme for holding Scotland and Ireland in submission, but he at least was answer-

<sup>1</sup> Figures under 1,000*l*. are omitted.

able for the concealed war with Spain. If he and his Parliament had been on good terms, some compromise would probably have been arrived at. As it was, a financial committee reported in favour of cutting down the army to the numbers appointed in the Instrument, and also of reducing the pay of the soldiers. Even if no constitutional difficulties had been raised, such a report was pretty sure to lead to an explosion.

It was to Oliver's credit that he did his best to get rid of military government, but the forces in existence were too strong for him. Apart from its material needs, the army shrank from entrusting supreme control to the nation at large, and the continuation of the Protectorate in defiance of Parliament was but on a par with the continuation of the authority of the residue of the Long Parliament against which Oliver had declared in 1653. Yet, even in the army, men were found to protest against this defiance of the representatives of the nation, and the petition drawn up by three Colonels, Okey, Alured, and Saunders, in October 1654, remains as the most telling defence of parliamentary right which has come down to us from those troublous times. The gist of their complaint may be summed up in the query: "Who is to contend against the master of 30,000 men?" The only answer they could give was to ask that the parliamentary organisation should be completed and invested with supreme authority.

It is easy to decry the Commonwealth's men, as they

were called—such men, for instance, as Bradshaw and Ludlow. Undoubtedly they were often inconsistent, and were not always ready to ask whether the Parliament they supported was truly representative. It seems to have been enough for them that it should bear the name of a Parliament, even when, like the poor remains of the Long Parliament, it was too timid to appeal to the constituencies. Nor do they ever seem to have faced the crucial question: “What will you do if a Parliament, freely elected, sweeps away all the reforms in Church and State which you have supported as being of supreme importance to the country?” For all that, they chose out of the various objects of political desire the one which not merely won, but deserved to win in the end. It is true no doubt that Parliaments can be tyrannical as well as Kings and Protectors, yet the establishment of parliamentary authority was a far more likely way to secure, slowly and gradually no doubt, individual freedom and wise reforms than the establishment of any sort of government resting on a military basis.

The dissolution of the first Protectorate Parliament in January 1655 may fairly be taken as announcing the failure of the system which Oliver had undertaken to found. His personal worth and vigour might uphold it during his lifetime, but his own reiterated urgency for a ‘settlement’—something, in short, which the nation would accept as final—was the strongest possible testimony that he had reached no harbour of refuge. Great



things he might still accomplish. At home he could uphold the standard of religious liberty with limitations which, if not wide enough for the present age, were at least wider than any Parliament was in those days prepared to offer. His unerring judgment of character enabled him to employ instruments better fitted for work of the most various kinds than the officials of any government likely to succeed him. For all that he failed to gain the confidence of the nation for his system, and by his readiness to accept alterations he hardly seemed to give it his own confidence. The support of his second Parliament was only obtained by the arbitrary exclusion of opposition members, and was lost when they were readmitted. The suggestion that the Protector should regularise his position by taking the title of King came to nothing both in consequence of the opposition of the army, and because it was hopeless for him to spring into a constitutionally defined position without separating himself from the support of the army. He was strong enough to maintain power to the day of his death. He could not hand it on to his successor.

In recent years it has been customary to extol Oliver's foreign policy at the expense of his domestic. Yet it was very far from answering his expectations. In the West Indies he was repulsed in his attack on Hispaniola, and had to content himself with what was then the barren possession of Jamaica. It proved impossible to make war with Spain in America and to keep peace with her in Europe. It is true that the war,



when once it outspread its original limits, was attended with success on both elements. Blake and Stainer destroyed or captured treasure-ships, and Lockhart, supported by Turenne and the French, reduced Dunkirk. To all objections brought against this policy on the score of its eventual failure, it has been held sufficient to reply that if Oliver had lived twenty years longer it would not have been a failure. Have those who put forward this argument ever considered the financial conditions under which he worked? The story of the administration of the navy as recently told by Mr. Oppenheim<sup>1</sup> demonstrates the weakness of the reasoning. Every year the impossibility of meeting the expenses of the fleet was more clearly revealed, and the condition of the seamen deteriorated in consequence. During the later years of the seventeenth century and the greater part of the eighteenth France suffered loss from attempting to put forth her power by land and sea at the same time. With far less excuse Oliver was guilty of the same mistake. He had not, indeed, been the first to discover the fact that England's path to greatness lay at sea. Elizabeth and the Commonwealth had preceded him in that, but he had certainly developed the sea power of the nation further than it had been developed before. With her small population and her still restricted commerce, could England bear the double strain to which France proved unequal, and be great on land as well as great at sea?

<sup>1</sup> *Administration of the Royal Navy*, by M. Oppenheim, 1896.

## LECTURE VI

## RECAPITULATORY

WHAT, then, did Cromwell accomplish to change the face of history? If we inquire of popular tradition we shall have but little doubt. He won battles; he cut off the King's head; he turned out Parliaments by military compulsion; he massacred the Irish at Drogheda; he made England respected by land and sea.

Is not the popular legend at least roughly in the right? All these things, it will be seen, are negative actions. Hostile armies were not allowed to be victorious; kings were not to be allowed to wield absolute power in disregard of the conditions of the time or the wishes of their subjects; Parliaments were not allowed to disregard public opinion; Irishmen were not allowed to establish a government hostile to England; foreign Powers were not allowed to disregard the force of England. All this is so plain that it needs no further consideration. Our difficulties come in when we ask what was the effect of those constructive efforts which popular tradition passes by. Is tradition right in neglecting these, as it is pre-eminently right in

magnifying the destructive blows dealt with no unstinting hand?

To the student who deals with the details of Cromwell's life a picture very different from that of the popular tradition is apt to present itself. He is compelled to dwell upon the hesitations and the long postponements of action which are no less characteristic of the man than are the swift decisive hammer-strokes which have caught the popular fancy. Yet these two sides of his character have to be harmonised in any complete estimate of the man and his work.

With the man we are here concerned only so far as a knowledge of him may enable us to understand his work, and it is enough to say that there is nothing in the combination of qualities which may fairly be ascribed to Cromwell to render it improbable that he would be as successful in statesmanship as he was in war. If we regard Cromwell's character apart from the circumstances amongst which he moved we should come to the conclusion that it was admirably fitted for the work of directing a State. If large-mindedness, combined with an open eye for facts, together with a shrinking from violence till it seems absolutely necessary to employ it, cannot fit a man to be a statesman, where can we hope to find statesmanship at all? Yet even if we set his management of Scotland and Ireland, and still more his management of foreign affairs, aside, and restrict ourselves to his dealing with English politics, of which he had far greater

personal knowledge, it is impossible to resist the conclusion that he effected nothing in the way of building up where he had pulled down, and that there was no single act of the Protectorate that was not swept away at the Restoration without hope of revival.

It must be remembered that no lasting effects result from any policy, whether negative or positive, which are not in accordance with the permanent tendencies of that portion of the world affected by them. Providence, it is said, is on the side of big battalions. Big battalions, indeed, may do much as far as the immediate future is concerned; but they can do nothing for the distant future. Evesham did not make Edward, when his time came to reign, an absolute sovereign, nor did Falkirk enable him to hand down the undisputed lordship of Scotland to his son. The effect of Naseby, on the other hand, and of the King's execution never were undone. Charles II., indeed, re-ascended the throne, but he sat on it under conditions very different from those of his father, and when James II. reverted to his father's conception the Stuart monarchy fell, past recall. So, too, with Cromwell's dealings with the Long Parliament. Never again did England tolerate a Parliament which, being itself but a fragment of its original numbers, set the constituencies at defiance as well as the King.

That Cromwell's success as a destructive force must have stood in the way of his success as a constructive statesman is too obvious to need much labouring, and

the proposition is indeed now accepted by all who handle the subject. No man was more aware of the danger than Cromwell himself. He was, at all events, personally disinclined to rattle the sabre to the terror of civilians. It has often been noticed that when Napoleon, before setting out for Waterloo, took the oath to observe the *Acte additionnel*, he appeared in military uniform, and the circumstance has been used to enforce the belief that in heart he was a soldier first and a civilian a long way afterwards. When Cromwell took the oath of the Protectorate, he was clothed in a civilian garb. All his constitutional efforts—efforts for which he had less intellectual aptitude than for any other of the problems he assailed—were directed to the transformation of the Military State into the Civil State. If his attempts were all frustrated, it was because of the impracticability of the task. He was in one sense, as the three Colonels declared, the master of 30,000 men; in another sense, he was their servant. He could not cast them off, as the restored Charles cast them off, because he had no such weight of public sentiment in his favour to support him, to say nothing of the ties by which he was bound to them by common memories and common aspirations. Every day the popular feeling was excited not so much against Cromwell's policy and action, as against his government by military support. How strong was the antagonism aroused appears by the length of time during which fear of military intervention in politics was prolonged. At the Restoration Charles II. could

only venture to keep up a very small force. In the reign of William III., when the long war came to an end by the Peace of Ryswick, Parliament cut down the army first to 10,000 and then to 7,000 men. Even in the time of the younger Pitt an excellent scheme for building barracks was rejected by the House of Commons lest its adoption should, by segregating the soldiers from civilian life, lend itself to their employment against the liberties of civilians.

Revulsion against authority maintained in power by means of the army must therefore be counted as the greatest amongst Cromwell's difficulties. To what extent Puritanism blocked his way it is not so easy to decide. That Puritanism, regarded as an extreme expression of Protestantism and as upholding the rights of the individual conscience against authority, did not perish at the Restoration is beyond all reasonable doubt. It ceased not to find worthy champions to uphold its banner, and by penetrating and informing its conquerors, it became the most precious possession of the nation. Nor is there any convincing reason to suppose that hostility to Puritanism of this kind had much to do with the overthrow of Cromwell's system. The revival of interest in the system of teaching and organisation which had endeared itself to Laud's comrades and disciples was mainly confined, as far as the somewhat scanty evidence in existence reaches, to the Cavalier country gentlemen, and the scholars expelled from the universities, together with those who fell under their influence. There is

nothing to show that if the nation at large had been freely consulted on the religious question alone the Restoration would have been accompanied by a violent ecclesiastical reaction, still less that the absence of the ceremonial introduced or restored by Laud was unpopular at any time between the execution of Charles I. and the Restoration of Charles II.

In speaking of Puritanism, however, as has been already said, we usually mean something different from this. It implies a system of doctrine and a system of discipline, though prominence was given unequally to these in various parts of the Puritan world. It was in fact a necessity that Protestantism should be systematised in one way or another. Without discipline, intellectual or physical, it would soon have drifted into anarchy, and into all the weakness that is the inevitable result of anarchy. As long as the struggle with Rome and her continental champions was kept up, so long did the systematising instinct prevail. In those years the Calvinist belief rooted itself even in episcopal minds, and found its strongest expressions in the Lambeth articles. At the same time the propensity towards the Calvinistic Presbyterian discipline was highly developed, not merely amongst the religious clergy, but amongst the religious Protestant laity as well.

When the days of storm and stress were over, and the defeat of the Armada had demonstrated that England had power to defend its own nationality, and with that its own national religion, against the forces of Spain



and Rome, it was but natural that the spiritual armour in which militant Englishmen had fought should appear heavy to the weary combatants, now anxious for rest, and that an opposition should spring up against the Calvinistic doctrine and discipline, which appeared to straiten rather than to support the free action of individual minds. On the one hand the opposition came from men who, like Bancroft, proclaimed the divine right of Episcopacy against the divine right of Presbytery, or, like Andrewes, attached themselves to external rites as influencing the spiritual conscience and mellowing the ironclad reasoning of the Calvinistic preacher. The strongest attack, however, and one far more difficult to meet, proceeded from the growth of that mundane spirit which, without in any way pandering to the lower passions, reveals itself in the great writers of the later years of Elizabeth and the early years of James I. It was the part of these writers, whatever their personal creeds may have been, to recall to their generation the complex nature of man, and to ask that either religion should broaden itself out, or at least that it should not stand in the way of the development either of man's intellect or of his physical independence. It was this opposition which eventually prevailed, not indeed against the spiritual and moral instincts, whether of Puritanism or of any other form of religion, but over the contraction of the Puritan creed and of the Puritan organisation. From this point of view the Puritanism of the seventeenth century may fairly



be regarded as a backwater, taking its course in a contrary direction to the general current of national development.

Like all backwaters the Puritan stream was deflected by an obstacle in its way, the obstacle of Laudian ceremonialism. In the first Parliament of James I. the House of Commons had distinctly asserted, 'We are no Puritans.' In the third Parliament of Charles I. it sought to restrain all preachers from declaring anything in opposition to the Calvinistic doctrine. In the Long Parliament the authors of the 'Grand Remonstrance' made the most of their determination not 'to let loose the golden reins of discipline and government in the Church, or to leave private persons or particular congregations to take up what form of Divine service they please.' It was inevitable that when once the fear of Charles and Laud was withdrawn, these pretensions should be somewhat abated. The only question was whether they should be modified from within the Puritan ranks, or battered down from without.

The change so far as it was directed from within was to be directed by Cromwell and by Cromwell's Independent allies. By them the doctrine of religious liberty was preached, and by them was upheld within the limits of practical statesmanship. Cromwell's first task was to preserve liberty of thought, that the 'people of God' might be shielded thereby. It was this that made Milton his warm ally, because with Milton liberty was not the negation of restraint, but the condition upon

which high design and high achievement depends. Nor was Milton alone in pointing in this direction. It is significant that the one important religious body which originated in the seventeenth century—that of the Society of Friends—owed its strength on the one hand to that extreme individualism which marks its doctrine as the quintessence of the higher Puritanism, but on the other hand to its unshrinking opposition to the Calvinistic discipline and the Calvinistic doctrine. No wonder Cromwell was drawn to its founder. “If thou and I,” said the Protector, “were but an hour of the day together, we should be nearer one to the other.”

Yet it was not Cromwell who founded religious liberty in England. His system perished at the Restoration, and when the idea was revived under the guise of toleration it came from another quarter altogether. It was not from Puritanism, high or low, that the gift was received, but from the sons of those Cavaliers and Presbyterians who had been Cromwell's bitterest enemies.

What, then, was the secret of Cromwell's failure to establish—not his dynasty, for that is of little importance—but his ideas? First, amongst the causes of failure must be reckoned his dependence on the army. The master of 30,000, or rather of 57,000, men could not win over a spirited nation which abhorred the rule of the soldiery, however veiled, and no less abhorred the taxation necessary for their support. It was all the more difficult to reconcile the nation and the army because that army had not won its renown in combat

with an alien foe. Unlike the soldiers of Napoleon, the men of the New Model had no Marengos or Jenas to boast of, victories which went to the heart of the French citizen as well as of the French soldier. Their laurels had been gathered in civil wars, and whilst the conquered ascribed to them the diminution of their estates, those who had formerly applauded the conquerors forgot their services in their more recent pretensions. Cromwell, who could not dispense with the army, was pushed on to give it popularity by launching it against foreign nations. It was all in vain. Englishmen refused to regard that army with pride and enthusiasm, as their descendants regarded the army that struck down Napoleon at Waterloo, or that died at its post before the beleaguered fortress of Sebastopol.

Indirectly, too, the military rule which Cromwell was never able to shake off endangered the permanence of his system, and must have endangered it even if, as his unreasoning worshippers fondly urge, his span of life had been prolonged for twenty years. It is the condition on which all strong intellectual and spiritual movements rest that they shall be spontaneous. They win their way by force of inward conviction, not by the authority of the State. How earnestly Cromwell desired to set conviction before force is known to all. He had broken the Presbyterian and Calvinistic chains, and had declared his readiness to see Mohammedanism professed in England rather than that the least of the saints of God should suffer wrong. Yet

he dared not give equal liberty to all. To the Royalists his person was hateful alike as the murderer of the King, as the General whose army had despoiled them of their property, and as the violator of 'the known laws' of the land. How, then, could he tolerate the religion of the Book of Common Prayer, which had become the badge of Royalism? It is true that the tide of persecution rose and fell, and that it was never very violent even at its worst; but it is also true that it could never be disowned. There was to be complete freedom for those who were Puritans, little or none for those who were not. Liberty of religion was to be co-extensive with the safety of the State. It was a useful formula, but hardly more when the safety of the State meant the predominance of an army, and the head of the State dared not throw himself on a free Parliament to give him a new basis of authority.

Nor was Puritanism itself, even after it had been cleansed in the waters of liberty, fitted to hold the directing power in the State. Though the checks which it placed upon worldly amusements have been over-estimated, it certainly did not regard such amusements with favour. Like all great spiritual movements, it was too strenuous, too self-contained to avoid drawing the reins over tightly on the worldling. All that was noblest in it would be of better service when it was relegated from the exercise of power to the employment of influence.

What, then, is Cromwell's place in history? If we

regard the course of the two centuries which followed his death, it looks as if all that need be said might be summed up in a few words. His negative work lasted, his positive work vanished away. His constitutions perished with him, his Puritanism descended from the proud position to which he had raised it, his peace with the Dutch Republic was followed by two wars with the United Provinces, his alliance with the French monarchy only led to a succession of wars with France lasting into the nineteenth century. All that endured was the support given by him to maritime enterprise, and in that he followed the tradition of the Governments preceding him.

Yet, after all, the further we are removed from the days in which Cromwell lived, the more loth are we to fix our eyes exclusively on that part of his work which was followed by immediate results. It may freely be admitted that his efforts to establish the national life upon a new basis came to nothing, without thinking any the worse of the man for making the attempt. It is beginning to be realised that many, if not all the experiments of the Commonwealth were but premature anticipations of the legislation of the nineteenth century, and it is also beginning to be realised that, whatever may be our opinion of some of Cromwell's isolated actions, he stands forth as the typical Englishman of the modern world. That he will ever be more than this is not to be expected. Even if Scotchmen forget

the memories of Dunbar and Worcester, it is certain that Drogheda and Wexford will not pass out of the minds of Irishmen. It is in England that his fame has grown up since the publication of Carlyle's monumental work, and it is as an Englishman that he must be judged.

What may be fairly demanded alike of Cromwell's admirers and of his critics is that they shall fix their eyes upon him as a whole. To one of them he is the champion of liberty and peaceful progress, to another the forcible crusher of free institutions, to a third the defender of oppressed peoples, to a fourth the asserter of his country's right to dominion. Every one of the interpreters has something on which to base his conclusions. All the incongruities of human nature are to be traced somewhere or other in Cromwell's career. What is more remarkable is that this union of apparently contradictory forces is precisely that which is to be found in the English people, and which has made England what she is at the present day.

Many of us think it strange that the conduct of our nation should often appear to foreign observers in colours so different from those in which we see ourselves. By those who stand aloof from us we are represented as grasping at wealth and territory, incapable of imaginative sympathy with subject races, and decking our misconduct with moral sentiments intended to impose on the world. From our own point of view, the exten-

sion of our rule is a benefit to the world, and subject races have gained far more than they have lost by submission to a just and beneficent administration, whilst our counsels have always, or almost always, been given with a view to free the oppressed and to put a bridle in the mouth of the oppressor.

That both these views have truth in them no serious student of the present and the past can reasonably deny. Whatever we may say, we are and have been a forceful nation, full of vigorous vitality, claiming empire as our due, often with scant consideration for the feelings and desire of other peoples. Whatever foreigners may say, we are prone, without afterthought, to place our strength at the service of morality and even to feel unhappy if we cannot convince ourselves that the progress of the human race is forwarded by our action. When we enter into possession, those who look on us from the outside dwell upon the irregularity of our conduct in forcing ourselves into possession; whilst we, on the contrary, dwell upon the justice and order maintained after we have once established ourselves.

With Cromwell's memory it has fared as with ourselves. Royalists painted him as a devil. Carlyle painted him as the masterful saint who suited his peculiar Valhalla. It is time for us to regard him as he really was, with all his physical and moral audacity, with all his tenderness and spiritual yearnings, in the world of action what Shakespeare was in the world of

thought, the greatest because the most typical Englishman of all time. This, in the most enduring sense, is Cromwell's place in history. He stands there, not to be implicitly followed as a model, but to hold up a mirror to ourselves, wherein we may see alike our weakness and our strength.

See Cromwell's place in  
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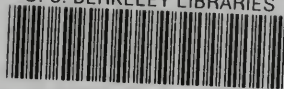
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